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68

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Sourcebook

Coming in 1993 for **DARK CONSPIRACY™**

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Challenge

Issue 68

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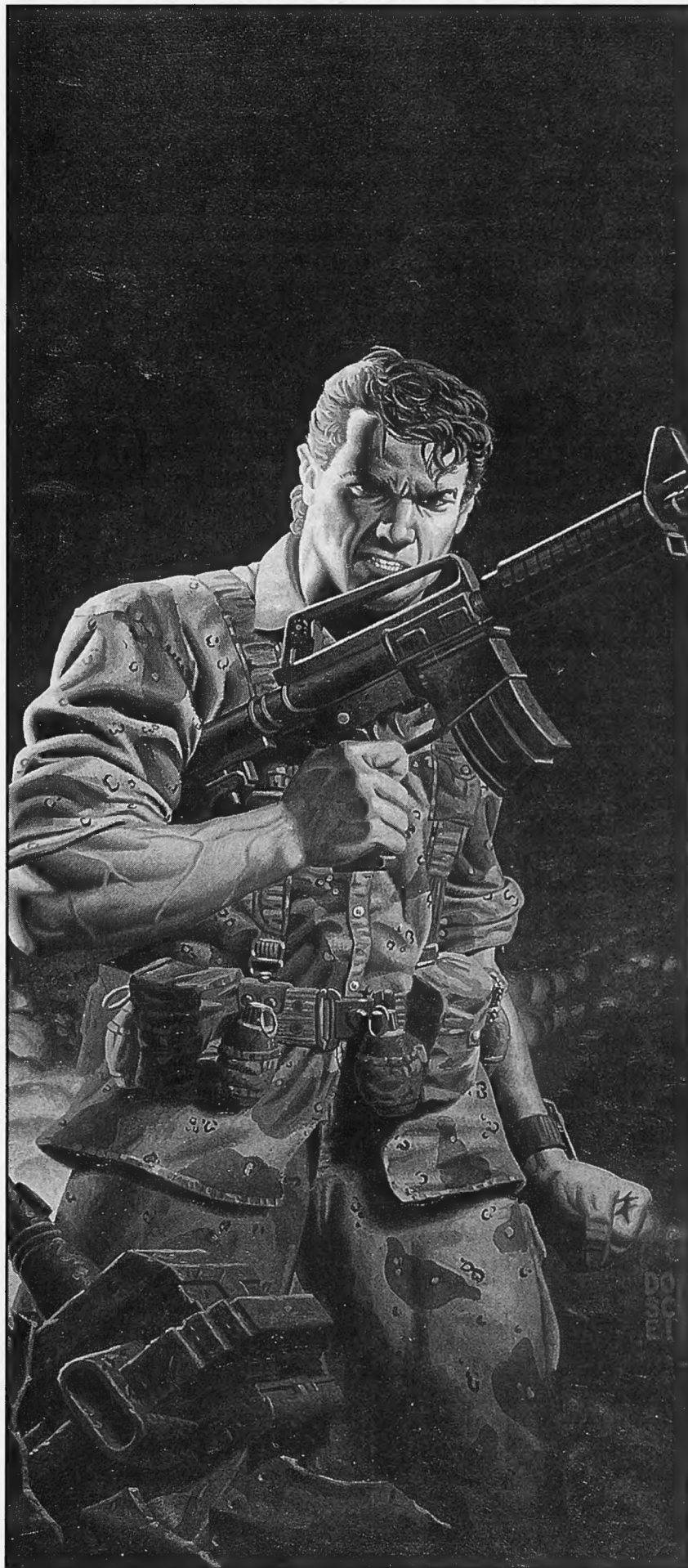
ABOUT THE COVER

Les Dorscheid gives us a portrait of an artist in *Merc: 2000*, wielding his own, personal brand of artistic license—the M16A2.

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FROM THE MANAGEMENT

By Michelle Sturgeon

It is with mixed feelings that I announce that **Challenge** is going to a bimonthly printing schedule starting with this issue.

On one hand, I hate to see it happen. We've accomplished a lot since going monthly with issue 50, with more refined content, a slicker look and, I think, a better overall magazine.

But economics have taken their toll, and we're having to cut back on expenses. Don't worry—we're not going under. Not even close to it. But we do have to flow with the times, and times are tough right now, in the gaming industry and everywhere. So we're trimming the production schedule to adjust to this condition before it really becomes a problem.

Basically, companies these days have two choices. They can do something about their situation, or they can just wait and hope things get better. We've decided to do something about it. Our options, then, are to either cheapen the magazine or to continue to produce the best magazine possible, but less frequently. We've chosen the latter.

If you're a subscriber to this magazine, don't worry—your subscription is for a specific number of issues, not a specific period of time, so you won't be shortchanged in any way. Your subscription will just last twice as long.

I'm betting this situation won't be permanent. In a few months, when our economics have lightened up a bit, we should be able to return to a monthly printing schedule. And I'm already working with the editorial and art staff on some new ideas for when that time comes.

Until then, we plan to work harder than ever to make each issue really count. We want to trim the fat, so to speak, and present only the *best* possible content and art to meet your specific needs. We're *not* planning to discontinue coverage of any specific games or features. But we *do* want to know exactly where your interests lie so we can give you, the reader, more of what you want, with special emphasis on the most popular gaming systems.

To this end, please take a few minutes to fill out the feedback form on page 85, as well as our special reader interest survey on the facing page. I'd be interested in getting a note from you as well, letting me know of any things you'd like to see changed—or not changed—to help **Challenge** continue to be the best magazine of SF gaming.

Flexibility is the Answer

Dear Challenge,

I am one of those people who rarely writes to magazines. I do not usually have the time. I give my feedback with my dollars. When I read the letter by Mr. Romanowski in issue number 65, I decided to make an exception. I was employed in the publishing industry for four years. You can find my name on the mast head of some old *Dragon* magazines. You would not publish a letter like Mr. Romanowski's unless you considered it a valid belief and wished to find out if others shared the opinion. I do not.

I believe that the answer to today's market is flexibility. Mr. Romanowski has several valid points about why to buy a magazine. If he is looking for a magazine that is just devoted to one game system, that is what he should buy. Using *Dragon* and *The General* as examples is like comparing apples to oranges. Both these magazines cater to one company's products. This may not always be by choice. Even back when I was with *Dragon Publishing*, we were always looking for people who were willing to send us articles for other game systems.

You are in a good position to get these types of articles and profit from them. I am sure you realize that TSR Hobbies and Avalon Hill publish many more titles in a given year than just about anyone else. If you take a look at TSR you will see a string of games like *Star Frontiers*, *Top Secret SI* and even *Gamma World* that get virtually no coverage in even *Dragon*. Yet in most cases these are science fiction.

Mr. Romanowski complains that there is not enough fiction for his type of game system. Is anybody writing it? Usually you will use good fiction if you get it. I did not notice him complaining that you had reduced the amount of *Traveller* fiction, just that you had not published any. Actually this complaint is a two-edged

sword. You can go out to the bookstore and find several shelves of good science fiction to read. I would think that the how-to articles and modules you run for *Twilight* and the various *Traveller* systems would be much more useful. As a game-master myself, I would be very pleased to see more how to articles for *Shadowrun*, my main game. I also read the articles on *Dark Conspiracy* and *Cyberpunk*. I have used ideas from several *Traveller* articles and *Twilight: 2000*, too.

Your magazine is doing just fine as it is. You are covering many games that need covering. Your readership will continue to grow. I have been purchasing your magazine since around issue 45. Not surprising since that is when you started to branch out. I do not have the opportunity to look at your sales figures, but I have noticed a steady improvement in content and quality since I began purchasing the magazine. I have a standing order at my local hobby shop for every issue.

I do have to apologize for one thing. I have never, and after this letter, *will* never send in your feedback section. In today's economy, I have to hoard my stamps.

In conclusion, I will close with these famous words: **Challenge**, the Magazine of Science Fiction Gaming—Amen!

Sincerely,
Corey Koebernick
Memphis, TN

P.S. Good BBS article, I am going out and buying a modem.

Challenge magazine welcomes your letters. The opinions presented do not necessarily reflect those of the magazine. Challenge reserves the right to edit letters. Write to Challenge Letters, Managing Editor, PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61702-1646 USA.

1993 Challenge Reader Survey

Dear Challenge Reader,

In order to make Challenge the best magazine possible, we need your input! The staff of Challenge would appreciate your taking the time to answer the questions below and mail your response to:

Challenge Reader Survey
c/o GDW
P.O. Box 1646
Bloomington, IL 61702-1646

ABOUT YOU

How old are you? _____
What is your gender? _____
What is the last grade of school you have completed? _____
How many hours per week do you spend gaming? _____
How much money do you spend on gaming each month? _____
How many people are in your gaming group? _____
Do you belong to a gaming club? _____
What is the size of your gaming club? _____
What game systems do you play? _____
Which do you play most? _____
What about this system do you enjoy most? _____

GAMING MAGAZINES IN GENERAL

Aside from Challenge, do you read any other gaming magazines? If so, please list. _____
Which is your favorite gaming magazine? _____
What makes that magazine your favorite? _____

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF CHALLENGE?

Including yourself, how many people read your copy of Challenge? _____
Do you subscribe to Challenge, or do you purchase Challenge at a store? _____
How long have you been reading Challenge? _____
What do you like most about Challenge? _____
What do you like least about Challenge? _____
Do you like the size of Challenge (page count)? _____
What do you think of the overall appearance (layout, graphics, etc.) of Challenge? _____
Do you feel Challenge gives you your money's worth? _____

Art

Do you like the cover art of Challenge? _____
What do you think of the interior illustrations in Challenge? _____
Do you like the maps in Challenge? _____

Content

What game systems do you like to read about most? _____
What game systems (recently published in Challenge) do you like to read about least? _____
What game systems currently not covered in Challenge would you like to see? Do you like the overall article mix of Challenge? _____
Would you like to see posters or pull-out maps? _____
Do you like the regular features in Challenge (Opinion, TNS, Conventions, Reviews, Classifieds)? _____

By Andrew Borelli

Poppies

I remember when the local PLO cell broke into some corporate office downtown a few years ago and waxed a suit who worked there. Trashed the whole office too, as I remember. It turns out the guy was dealing opium on the side, running a poppy farm and financing the operation with the company's money. The PLO team that did it finally got taken down by the guy's security guards, but when the smoke cleared, lots of people were saying how nice it would be if the terrorists and the criminals would just kill each other.

Well, it just doesn't work like that. 'Cause lots of times, the terrorists and the criminals are in league together. Trust me. I know.

Jerusalem, June 12, 2000

The Fathers of Muslim Revolution is a splinter PLO group with a base in Egypt, near the Israeli-Sinai border. The FMR is theoretically a political terrorist organization, but newer members act more like bandits and use marauder tactics to get what they want.

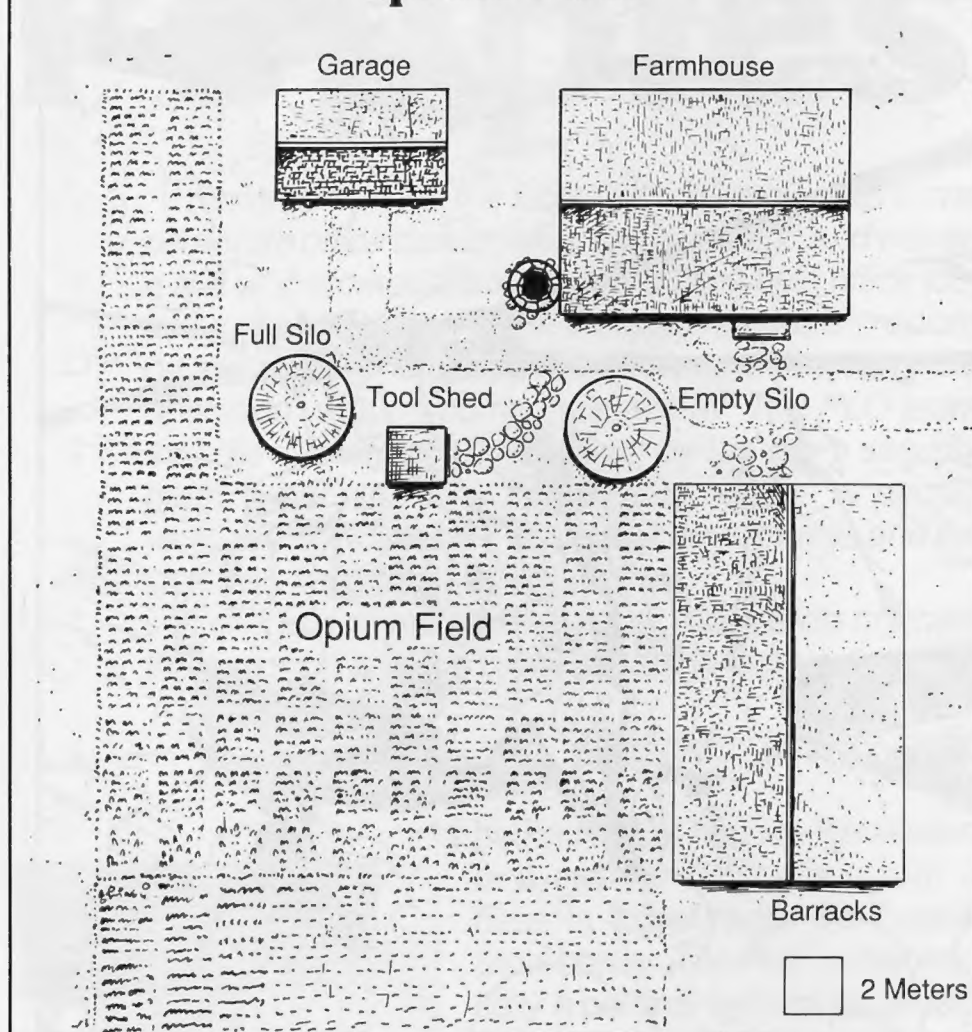
A number of unprovoked murders and burnings along the countryside have been attributed to this group, as well as dozens of bombings in the Israeli Occupied Zone. More and more, the FMR has turned toward criminal activity and lost sight of its original goals, if it ever had any.

The PLO is planning to split with this group soon, and the leader of the FMR knows it. He also knows that without the military hardware and political support the PLO provides, the FMR will quickly collapse. Consequently, the FMR has turned to drug production to make up for the loss.





Opium Farm



Members are currently farming a large poppy field in Egypt using technology and tools provided by a large criminal syndicate in exchange for labor.

The PCs are either an experienced team that has worked together before or individual operatives brought together specifically for this mission. They are contacted by a patron who knows them by contact or reputation, then provided flight tickets to Jerusalem for the start of the adventure. Their mission is to destroy the drug farm completely and eliminate as much of the terrorist group as possible.

The patron is anxious for the mission to succeed because the syndicate is particularly nasty, and the opium product has started to flood Jerusalem's streets. In addition, the FMR is wanted for a number of crimes, and the pressure to stop the operation is on the patron's shoulders.

Once in Jerusalem, the PCs will meet with the patron, and they can go over the plan and study the map. They can also request any equipment they may

need, but time and resources are rather limited here. From Jerusalem, they'll be transported to the Sinai, hidden as part of a routine convoy to the area.

APPROACH

The PCs will be inserted via a UH-60 Blackhawk flown from a staging area in the Sinai. A Cobra armed with two FFAR pods, two TOW missiles and a 20mm gun will accompany the Blackhawk all the way to the landing zone. The team will touch down at LZ Gimel, located one kilometer south of the poppy farm, at 0115 hours.

The wind is calm, and it's a cool, dry night. The moon will be blotted out by a thick cloud cover until approximately 0200, so visibility will be affected as per the normal night combat rules. When the cloud bank lifts, the night sky will light up and visibility will improve—a help or hindrance depending on the PCs' situation at the time.

The team will march one kilometer across desert terrain to the outskirts of the poppy field. There the PCs can set

the poppies afire, proceeding quickly through the burning field. The PCs will be issued a certain chemical to use when they burn the fields. The chemical is in three aerosol spray cans which should be sprayed over as much of the field as possible and then ignited. This is a defoliant used to ruin the soil and make it unsuitable for further farming. The team will then secure the farming facilities and destroy them completely ("anything marked on the map with a star," as the patron tells them, which means just about everything).

The characters may deal "at will" with farm workers who react to the blaze; terrorists encountered should be eliminated.

RETRIEVAL

The Blackhawk and Cobra will refuel at the staging area and fly to LZ Koph, half a click north of the farm. The retrieval will come exactly one hour after insertion. The Blackhawk will not land unless it spots red smoke and will only wait five minutes to see the signal. The Cobra will hang back and fly a slow circling pattern around the LZ, checking for signs of trouble.

If the PCs are pursued or if something really goes awry, the Cobra will provide air support to the PCs at the landing zone.

REFEREEING THE ATTACK

Production has slowed down at this farm because the Fathers of Muslim Revolution have been devoting a lot of their time to anti-Israeli activities. What the PCs don't know is that a member of the syndicate that employs the terrorists is now at the farm to take over the operation. In his possession are a number of ledgers the patron would pay an extra \$4000 for. If the syndicate member and/or the terrorist leader are brought back alive, the patron will pay an additional \$3000 for each. The syndicate man is an Elite NPC armed with a G-11, combat knife, and Kevlar body armor.

Thirty workers at the farm help grow and harvest the poppy plants. The workers, armed with knives and clubs, are mostly Novice NPCs. The overseer, who carries an M1933 Tokarev, is Experienced.

In addition, 10 terrorists are stationed here, nine of them Veterans, one an Elite soldier. The terrorists are armed with six AK-74s, three Uzis and a double-barreled shotgun. One of the AKs has a Soviet BG-1 40mm grenade launcher attached to it, with six grenades immediately available. Each terrorist also has

a single fragmentation grenade. The Elite terrorist who heads the operation has an RPG-16 in his office with five rockets.

If the PCs are not spotted in transit to the fields (Easy: Stealth roll), then the workers will all be asleep. Three bored terrorists will be patrolling the fields, and the others will be sleeping. If the PCs are spotted or make too much noise on their initial approach through the field (Average: Stealth) the farm will go on alert, and all the terrorists will actively patrol the area while the workers stand guard over the fields.

When the fields start to burn, it will take one minute for the guards to notice. After that, the alert will be sounded, and the additional terrorists will take two minutes to assemble. The workers will start pouring out of their bunks four minutes after the alarm. They will be more interested in putting out the fire than dealing with the attackers, but they will fight back if attacked. They'll also fire first if they think they have a clear shot at a PC, then fall back and call for one of the terrorists.

Setting the charges to destroy the farming facilities requires an Average: Demolitions roll.

No roll is required for the PCs to know what to destroy because their maps are marked.

MAPS

The farm map depicts the entire farm layout, while the farmhouse map provides the floorplan of the house itself. This floorplan, reproduced here for your convenience, is from the original **Twilight** rules, with some modifications, as outlined in the Farmhouse section below.

Farmhouse: This is a residential house built within the last 30 years. Use the suburban townhouse map from the original **Twilight** rules, with these changes: The family room is now the syndicate man's office, and he sleeps in one of the bedrooms on the second floor. The terrorist leader has an office in the living room, and he sleeps in the smaller bedroom on the second floor. The sewing room is used to store ammunition, while the kitchen and laundry accommodate the residents of the farm. The garage is used as a small lab where some of the poppies are converted to pure opium.

Garage: This is a recently built structure, much larger than the garage attached to the house. Parked in the garage are two 3/4-ton trucks used to transport the product and a civilian car for general purpose use. There is also a



beat-up Egyptian T-34. The engines and treads work properly (barely), but the turret is stuck in its current position and can only fire forward. The main gun has two rounds left, and the PK MG has 100 rounds still on the belt. The hull MG no longer functions. There is roughly 10 minutes worth of fuel left. The terrorists and PCs may try to use any of these vehicles at will.

Silos: These are large, bulky, prefabricated structures that resemble grain silos. One of the silos is currently empty, while the other contains harvested poppy plants and should be destroyed.

Tool Shed: This is a small shed made of corrugated metal where tools are stored. There is a tractor and a plow parked outside, which should be destroyed along with the shed.

Barracks: This is a simple wooden frame building where the workers and terrorists sleep.

ALTERNATIVES AND VARIANTS

- The Sinai is an unstable region

which Israel shares uneasily with Egypt. Since the PCs are transported to the Sinai in an armored convoy, they may be targets of a terrorist attack en route to the staging site. Or, once at the site, it may be attacked, destroying the PCs' transport and leaving them to complete the job on their own. The number of terrorists and their armaments may be reduced or increased to balance out the fight; maybe the tank in the garage is actually a brand new T-86?

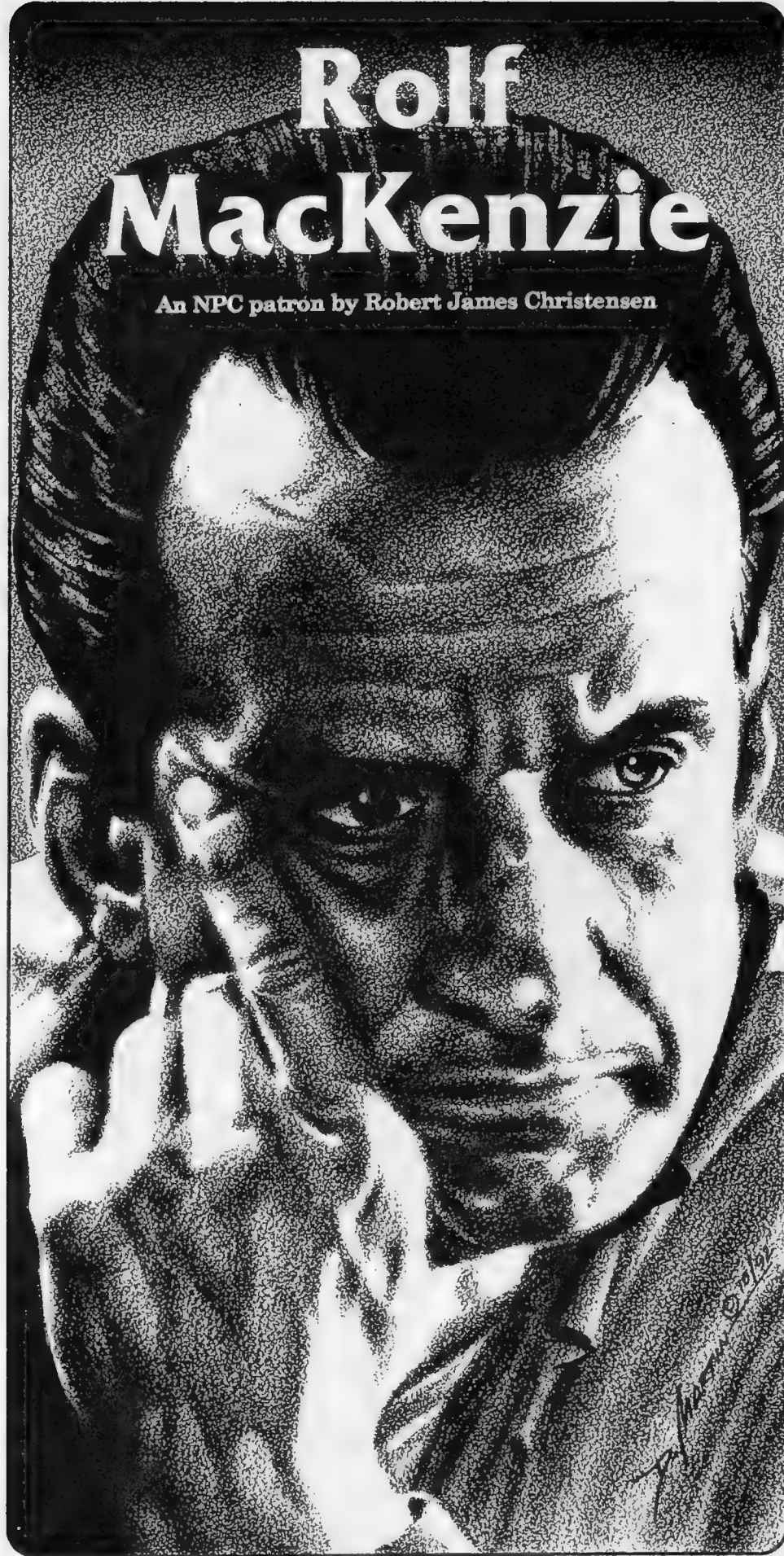
- The terrorists have been deemed inefficient and cut from the deal. When the PCs arrive, the farm is being guarded and operated by well armed, Elite syndicate muscle.

- The PCs are sent only to mark the field with flares and told to wait for an air strike—which either never comes or arrives very late.

- The raid is so successful and the patron so impressed that he offers more missions against the Fathers of Muslim Revolution or the syndicate they work for, based on information in the syndicate ledgers found by the PCs. Ω

Rolf MacKenzie

An NPC patron by Robert James Christensen



Gallowglass Military Services is considered one of the best mercenary recruiting services in the world (although not as important as the numerous operations in Singapore). It has become the leading employer of mercs entering the chaotic Chinese conflicts and the sole selection organization for persons desiring to join the Hong Kong Defense Force (but not involved in the Hong Kong Defense Force's day-to-day supervision).

Gallowglass is run by Major Rolf MacKenzie, a former member of the British Special Boat Service, who offers his vast experience and renown to his firm.

Mackenzie exclusively uses NATO weapons, particularly familiar British issue, the most noted being Sterling SMGs, HP-35 pistols, L1A1 battle rifles, FN-FNC assault rifles, HK-69 grenade launchers and Carl Gustav ATR launchers. If the team hired is currently without arms, MacKenzie will simply subtract the cost of any requested (and accessible) weapons from the total payment. Standard communication equipment issued (and sold) by Gallowglass consists of individual tactical radios (two-kilometer range) and a portable satellite communications downlink system to relay location, mission status and requests for retrieval.

Two conflicts MacKenzie is staying out of are the Indonesian and Philippine civil wars, although he does pass along certain pertinent intelligence to a friend in the Royal Australian Air Force.

STATISTICS

Rolf MacKenzie: Major Rolf MacKenzie is a former member of the British Special Boat Service now residing in Hong Kong. Born of landed Scottish stock, MacKenzie has been decorated many times in service to both Queen Elizabeth and King Charles. Upon retiring from the Royal Marines, he set up his own military consultant firm in the city he skillfully helped defend.

Prospective employees can meet with the major at the Flying Tiger, a top-rated restaurant/bar known for great Cantonese cuisine and 1940s big band music. MacKenzie firmly believes in the personal interview. He deems a merc units' honor, skill and renown for military ingenuity more desirous than actual experience in battle. His clientele is appraised in the same manner; any patron thinking of forsaking the team in a jam or skipping out on paying may

expect a "surprise" from the major, and a rather nasty one at that.

In his usual dress of bifocals, wool business suit and kilt, along with his slightly graying hair and quiet eccentricities, the late-fortyish MacKenzie looks more the part of regal Scottish laird than mercenary leader; but his five extremely loyal Ghurka bodyguards tell otherwise. When travelling about Hong Kong in his personal V-150 (with escorting Fox armored car), MacKenzie is always accompanied by his Ghurkas, three Gallowglass staffers and his own personal bagpiper, Nate.

He has an English wife, Rebecca, and two sons, Roger and Maxwell.

MacKenzie is to be considered a Level III patron.

Level: Elite.

Skills: Persuasion: 6, Leadership: 5, Observation: 5, Small Arms (Pistol): 5, Small Arms (Rifle): 3, Swimming: 4, Mountaineering: 4, Melee Combat (Unarmed): 4, Small Boat: 4, Nepalese: 4, French: 3, Cantonese: 3, Mandarin: 3.

Initiative: 6.

Ghurkas: These five tough mountain warriors of Nepal first gave allegiance to the British Crown, but now their loyalty is Major MacKenzie and his mercenary consulting firm. Any hostile action against the major would result in the quick death of the assailants; heads would literally roll.

Each carries a Kuri knife and L2A3 Sterling SMG (102 rounds)

Level: Elite.

Skills: Melee Combat (Armed): 8, Foraging: 7, Small Arms (Rifle): 8, Observation: 7.

Initiative: 6.

POSSIBLE MISSIONS FOR THE PCs

- General Quan Mingshui, a Western-looking Chinese military commander, has just succeeded in retaking the port city of Wenzhou from its despotic ruler. Unfortunately, his brigadesized force was battered in the attack, and needs replacements and new equipment immediately. He cannot spare any of his remaining troops to train the locals. MacKenzie is hiring a small cadre force, preferably either ex-Green Berets or former drill instructors, to train four 300-man companies, and perhaps train and lead a 100-man quick-strike unit. Payment will be \$200 up front and \$800 a week for at least two months. Transport will be by yet another Hong Kong-based freighter. A total of 200 Italian AR-70 assault rifles and 600 old Lee Enfield rifles will be sent along, so the team will have to start

scrounging for more personal arms. While the group is training the new recruits, the old warlord will attempt to retake the city with over 2000 fresh troops (30% Veteran, 50% Experienced and 20% Novice NPCs).

- "Freedom fighters" (at least to MacKenzie) in Xinjiang have reported that one of the local warlords has five Long March missiles armed with nuclear warheads. The missiles are in the state of being repaired 95 kilometers out of the city of Muji. MacKenzie needs a team to infiltrate the area, investigate and verify this story. Payment is \$500 up front and \$1200 afterward. MacKenzie is working with MI-6 on this, and if the PCs have the opportunity to disrupt the warlord's project, they will be rewarded with \$20,000 and several high contacts at MI-6. Air transport will be provided to Kirghizia, with retrieval by a Kirghizian Army helicopter back to the Frunge airport. The missiles are maintained by 40 crewmembers (treat as Novice NPCs in combat), guarded by 200 Veteran NPCs with five tanks and 12 APCs.

- A large Japanese conglomerate is having serious problems with its Malaysian operation in the city of Ipoh. Hashish dealers have infested the area, and several dozen workers are regular customers. Theft, accidents and flagrant dealing on the site are ruining the profitability of this division, and the top executives want it stopped. The team is to capture some lower-rank dealers, interrogate them to learn the location of their jungle base, then stage a crippling raid on it. The team will be paid per member \$1000 up front, \$200 a day, then a \$1500 bonus afterward. Transport will be by commercial airfreighter to Kuala Lumpur.

- MacKenzie is on good terms with the king of Nepal, and frequently ships him arms to help defend against Chinese and Indian marauder bands. The PCs are to escort such an arms shipment to Kathmandu. The problems will be getting the arms into India, and avoiding the local authorities, numerous marauder gangs and "private" militias. The total team payment will be \$4000 up front, \$10,000 upon successful completion of the mission. This shipment weighs a total of 11 tons but is transported in 22 separate containers. The team will be given transport on a Hong Kong-registered freighter to a seaport (or isolated shore) of the team's choice, but all transport after that will be the concern of the team.

- Colonel Li Feng, a minor warlord in the Heilongjiang province, is in a di-

lemma. A marauding band of soldiers from the old People's Army has begun to cross the border into Russia to raid for food and supplies. Unfortunately for Feng, Russian military leaders suspect that his forces are to blame. So far, response has been limited to a few border incursions by Russian troops and an infrequent flyover of Feng's main city of Xuguit Qi by fighter bombers, but fear of a major Russian attack is preventing the bedraggled warlord from sending his forces into the border region to combat the marauders. MacKenzie is hiring a small merc team to track and find the marauder band, then cause enough damage to the group to make it ineffectual. Payment is \$800 up front, \$400 a day and a \$3000 bonus for success. Transport to Xuguit Qi will be provided by MC-130, with a brief stop in Korea (depositing yet another merc team on their mission). The marauder band is 218 strong (Experienced NPCs), with three tanks, five APCs and 30 horses.

- The United States Defense Intelligence Agency is getting little worried over the brewing border dispute between Japan and Russia over the long-disputed Kuril Islands. As a neutral party, MacKenzie has been subcontracted to send a reconnaissance party into the area and report on both Japanese and Russian military preparations. On the Russian side, the local civilian authorities are building hundreds of future underground bunkers and gun emplacements, and they are in the planning stages of laying minefields. Back on the Japanese side, careful infiltration of the coastal area near Shibetsu will reveal a staging area for a very large military force. If they pose as tourists in the nearby seaside villages, the team members will be recognized by old military buddies being hired on by the Japanese Defense Force as consultants for a future military operation to retake the islands. Fortunately, H-Hour for the invasion is nearly a decade away, but long enough for the Russians' defenses to be solidified. Sneakiness (and good roleplaying) will uncover all this information. If the team members can get the information back to MacKenzie, international diplomacy will prevent a major war from erupting. The major is adamant about one thing—going in quiet and getting out quieter. Payment to the player characters will be \$2000 up front, \$400 a day and a \$3000 bonus for success. Transport will be provided by one of Hong Kong's three 25-year-old surplus diesel attack submarines. Ω

Lightning Never Strikes Twice

By James Maliszewski

As members of a semi-independent trouble-shooting team for the Antarean intelligence network Trasilon, the PCs' task is to follow a lead which may result in the capture of an elusive Imperial Naval Intelligence (INI) mastermind in the League of Antares. In addition, they are determining whether or not this mysterious individual has anything to do with a recent rash of terrorist attacks on the world of Sarar. While the mission seems routine, the PCs are about to learn that there is more going on than meets the eye.

This adventure occurs chronologically after the scenario "The Coreward Conspiracy," published in **Challenge 59**. While not a direct sequel and capable of being played on its own, this adventure deals with similar themes and continues the story of the PCs' efforts on behalf of the League of Antares.

The PCs begin their mission after arriving at Sarar, an important world of the Coreward territories of the League of Antares near the border with Julian space. No Trasilon safe houses are available for PC use since Sarar's rulers consider such a presence to be an intrusion in local affairs.

Sarar (Antares 1115 B57399C-D), a high-population world, is the subsector capital as well as the capital of the Antares Ring Cluster (ARC) Confederation, a small, semi-autonomous region within the borders of the League of Antares. The cluster's seven worlds possess large ethnic Solomani populations. During the Long Night, they did not lose jump technology and formed the only significant interstellar state in the sector during that era. The ARC lost its separate identity under the Third Imperium, but was reestablished in 1086 and has enjoyed semi-autonomous status. Relations between the ARC and the central Antarean government are cool at best, and the ARC's citizens oppose the Antarean/Julian alliance.

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DISCOVERY

INTERSTELLAR STARPORT

The PCs' starship lands at the starport at the Discovery arcology, a vast city with close to 2 billion inhabitants. The starport is the site of considerable traffic. While still a few parsecs from the border, Sarar is considered a gateway to the Julian Protectorate and the Galactic Core regions.

From their superiors, the PCs have learned that a suspected INI mastermind is known to frequent the Central Discovery Hotel not far from the starport. Unfortunately, no one knows who this person is or what he or she may look like. What the PCs do know is that the individual was to meet an INI agent named Jonathan Ekkair on 150-1129. Ekkair posed as a cop named Jeofroy Dobzhanski on Ambemshan (Antares 0216) to spinward and was involved in a plot to kill a Vargr emissary to the League of Antares. Now Ekkair is dead and the plot foiled. But Trasilon would still like to know more about INI operations in the sector, and this unknown mastermind is the key. With any luck, the PCs will be able to stop this person from doing more harm. In addition, perhaps the PCs can discover if there is any connection between the INI mastermind and the recent rash of terrorist attacks against shipping companies on Sarar.

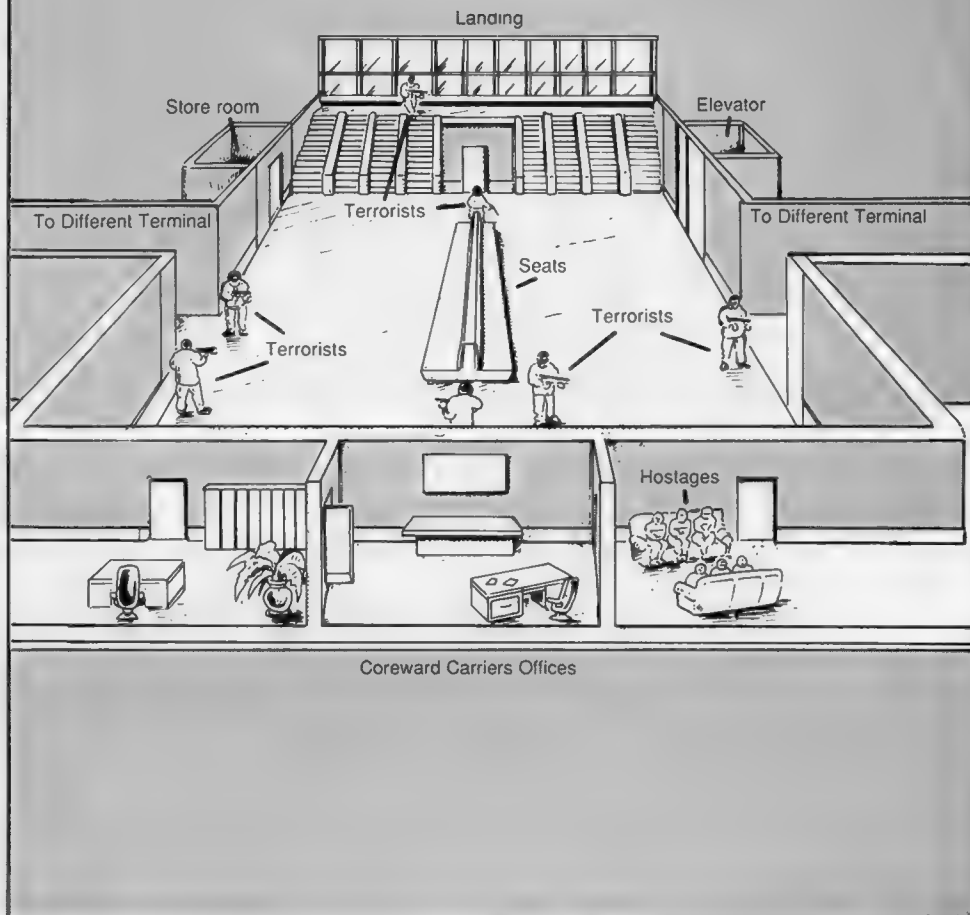
CENTRAL DISCOVERY HOTEL

The PCs may want to go to the Central Discovery Hotel. The meeting with Jonathan Ekkair was supposed to occur on 150-1129. The PCs arrive several days before that date. As a result, they have a few days in which to prepare themselves for their investigation.

One possibility would be to give a description of Ekkair to the hotel manager, Kaalin Malpighi. Malpighi will say that he vaguely remembers such a man, but he is not certain. A bribe of at least Cr500 will result in his saying that he does remember the man. His name was Dobzhanski, though, not Ekkair. This confirms what the PCs already know since Dobzhanski was Ekkair's alias on Ambemshan. Malpighi's story checks out well with what Trasilon has told the PCs about Ekkair. He worked for a time as a cop on Sarar before moving to Ambemshan. On that world, Ekkair lived in very posh surroundings, impossible to afford on a law enforcer's salary. Ekkair claimed a rich aunt willed him the money, but Trasilon knows he received the money via direct deposit from Sarar. The Ambemshani bank did not know its source; perhaps the Sararian one does.

MegaTraveller

Coreward Carriers Terminal



FOLLOWING LEADS

The PCs now have two leads to follow. The first, at the police bureau, turns up little. Dobzhanski/Ekkair worked there for a few years and then moved on. He did not socialize with anyone except a woman whose name no one can remember. Some do recall that she was an executive at Coreward Carriers, LIC, a transport business doing trade to the Galactic Core. Some of its ships travel as far as Trenchans and Gashikan sectors. Coreward Carriers is a business hit several times recently by the terrorist attacks, although no one knows why.

The other lead, at the bank, requires persuasiveness from the PCs. The employees will not give them access to the files as such information is private and cannot be distributed. A bribe will help.

To bribe a bank official:

Difficult, Bribery, Persuasion, 1 minute (unskilled OK).

Referee: The initial bribe must be at least Cr2000, or the individual will refuse to help. Only failed rolls after the initial Cr2000 can be retried; all automatically fail.

If the PCs succeed, they learn that Dobzhanski/Ekkair's account on Ambemshan was being filled through a corporate account of Coreward Carriers. The authorizing officer for the direct deposit was Jennifer Keshiiga, an executive vice-president.

COREWARD CARRIERS, LIC

The PCs may want to talk with Jennifer Keshiiga. The headquarters of the



NPCs

INI Intruders at Coreward Carriers: UPP 889787. *Skills:* Laser Pistol-2 Brawling-1. *Weapons:* Laser pistols, cloth armor.

INI Terrorists at Starport: UPP 998897. *Skills:* Laser Rifle-2 Brawling-1. *Weapons:* PGMP-1. Seven possess laser rifles and wear cloth armor. One possesses a PGMP-14 and wears combat armor.

company is in the city of Discovery. Unfortunately, it is not open for business. There appear to be no people inside at all. The place is deserted, very odd for the daytime. Other branches will say inventory is being done at the main office. A well-placed bribe of at least Cr200 to a secretary will get a confirmation of Keshiiga's position as an executive vice-president, as well as her description and home address in Discovery city.

The PCs may get the idea to break into the main office at night. In order to do this, the PCs will have to get past the magnetically sealed doors of the place.

To open a magnetic lock without a pass:

Difficult, Intrusion, Electronic, 5 seconds.

Once inside, the PCs are free to look around. The place is dark, and no one is present, not even guards. The building appears to have been cleaned out, perhaps due to some inventory assessment. With the exception of a few random cargo orders and the like, one of which is for certain TL16 computers and programs from the nearby world of L'iispa

(Antares 1216) to be delivered on Coreward Carriers vessels to the Pirbarish Starlane, the PCs will find little of use. The office computers may offer some leads, though.

Computers: Using the computers is quite simple. The PCs simply input commands and search through online files. No software is available; the PCs must tie into the office's mainframe. Of course, the terminals have codes which the PCs do not know, which complicates matters. For every five-minute period the PCs use a computer, they must roll the following task:

To find useful information in the computer:

Difficult, Computer, Edu, 5 minutes (unskilled OK).

The PCs must also roll the following task for every five minutes of computer use to avoid setting off computer security:

To avoid computer security programs: Routine, Computer, 5 minutes (fateful).

Referee: If one of the security programs is set off, the computer terminal

will shut down alert local police, and 2D6 officers will arrive in 2D6 minutes. See Visitors, below.

If the PCs succeed in finding useful information, read them the following: "Jennifer Keshiiga, an executive vice-president, has been with the firm for about six years, having come highly recommended from Wellesmoor Diversified Products of Lishun." A full description is given, as well as her home address in Discovery.

If this piece of information is not enough for the PCs, they might seek another source, such as a hardcopy storage vault.

Storage Vault: Like most companies, Coreward Carriers keeps a separate vault to store its hardcopies of important information. This is a safeguard against computer memory failure. The storage vault is hidden and requires a task to spot it:

To locate the hidden storage vault:
Difficult, Recon, Int, Edu, 5 minutes (unskilled OK).

Once located, the vault must be opened. The vault has a high-level magnetic seal to prevent intrusion, as well as security alarms. Only the highest-level executives in the company have access to the vault. To open the vault successfully requires the following task:

To open the storage vault:

Difficult, Intrusion, Electronic, Edu, 1 minute (fateful).

Referee: Any failed roll will set off alarms, which will send 2D6 law enforcers to the office in 2D6 minutes. See Visitors, below.

The vault contains thousands of pieces of paper filed according to various categories. Only two files are of any interest to the PCs; these are labeled "payroll" and "foreign orders." These files take a great deal of time to read.

The payroll file includes an order by Keshiiga to deposit directly Cr100,000 into Jeofroy Dobzhanski's account on Amebmshan "for services rendered." Similar deposits are continued monthly until 122-1129, the day the Vargr delegation arrived which INI tried to eliminate.

The foreign orders file includes a cargo manifest for TL16 computer technology from the world of L'iispa to spinward to be delivered to the Pirbarish Starlane, where they will then be transferred to Kudukara Lines freighters. The destination of the Kudukara freighters is not mentioned.

Visitors: The section details any encounters the PCs may have during their search of the Coreward Carriers office. If any alarms are set off, the police will arrive and be quickly gunned down by a second group waiting outside. If the PCs set off alarms and try to escape, this second group will stop them. Finally, if no alarms go off, this second group will still arrive just as the PCs are leaving, blocking their exit.

This second group numbers six armed NPCs. They will attack the PCs, trying to kill them. They will fight to the death and try to flee if cornered. If unable to escape, they will fight on. Once the NPCs are defeated, the PCs may examine their bodies but will find little. One of the attackers will possess a holopicture of Keshiiga and her home address. Another will have a tattoo on his body of a black lightning bolt, the well-known sigil of the vicious Black Lightning terrorist group.

Black Lightning is a group which opposes the Antarean/Julian alliance. Members favor a return of the Coreward subsectors of Lishun and Antares to the Julians since they were illegally taken during the Julian War. Since the Julians themselves do not support the terrorists in this assertion, they have become anti-Julian as well as anti-Antarean. The group may be receiving covert aid from enemies of those states such as Lucan's Imperium or a faction within the Empire of Gashikan.

No matter what, more local police will soon arrive. Thus, the PCs should beat a hasty retreat and take stock of their current situation. A number of new possibilities present themselves.

KESHIIGA'S APARTMENT

The most obvious place for the PCs to go next would be Keshiiga's apartment. The apartment complex is near the Central Discovery Hotel. She lives on the twelfth floor, which is easily accessible by elevator. The door is locked, so the PCs will have to break in.

To open the door to Jennifer Keshiiga's apartment:

Routine, Intrusion, Str, Instant (unskilled OK).

The apartment clearly belongs to a fairly wealthy person, containing a good number of expensive items. In general, the place is exquisite in appearance as befits an executive vice-president of a corporation. The closets are rather bare, however, with most of the clothing missing. In short, the apartment has been stripped of most essential items, with

only more valuable and less portable objects remaining. The computer terminal has no software, and its memory appears to have been wiped.

A search will reveal a copy of a paper order for computer technology and software to be sent out of L'ispa to Coreward via Sarar. The order is signed by Jennifer Keshiiga and is scheduled to leave Discovery Interstellar Starport on 151-1129, which is tomorrow.

Other than this, no other information is available at the apartment.

Neighbors: If the PCs question any of Keshiiga's neighbors or the building superintendent, they will learn that Keshiiga left her apartment rather hastily yesterday. While she has been saying for days that her branch office would be closed on 150-1129 in order to take inventory, several people reported seeing her near the Central Discovery Hotel. She appeared nervous and worried, and she avoided contact with everyone around her.

Later, she returned to her room and packed her belongings. She said she was going on a business trip in the morning and could not wait to leave. She did not say where she was going, but did say that if a man named Garth Devon came looking for her, no one should tell him they had seen her. She did not say why.

No one named Devon came looking for her, but a group of odd men came to see her after she left. When told she had gone, they said they would look for her at the branch office. Perhaps she would be doing inventory that night.

WHAT NOW?

The PCs should now realize that things are not as simple as they appear. Someone else is looking for Keshiiga, and they may well be the Black Light-

ning members who tried to kill the PCs last night. Why they want Keshiiga remains something of a mystery.

What is certain, however, is that Keshiiga intends to leave Sarar tomorrow and that she is taking a large quantity of illegal computer technology with her into Julian space. Just why remains to be seen. Her connection to Black Lightning is also certain, but its scope is not. Thus, the PCs will likely want to go to Discovery Interstellar Starport and try to stop Keshiiga from leaving Sarar. And they must get there before their mysterious adversaries from last night do so.

STARPORT

When the PCs arrive at the starport, they will immediately notice that a large number of law enforcement vehicles and police officers are present. There is even a small contingent of league marines, dressed in combat armor and carrying heavy weapons. Something is definitely up at the starport.

The authorities will be reluctant, at first, to reveal anything about the situation. Both league and Sararian authorities want to keep the whole affair under wraps for the time being. If the PCs reveal they are working with Trasilon, league authorities will fill them in, but the Sararian officials will become suspicious of them. It is well-known that the president of the Antares Ring Cluster Confederation, Count Karl Abrams, distrusts Archduke Brzk and his policies. That distrust extends particularly to Trasilon and its agents.

The league officials will explain that a cell of the terrorist group Black Lightning has seized control of one of the starport's terminals, the one used by Coreward Carriers. Seven terrorists have taken about a half dozen hostages. The terrorists are demanding a

The Plot Thickens

Each of the four items of information gained at Coreward Carriers is significant. The first gives a description of Keshiiga and her home address. In addition, it shows that she is an INI agent. Wellesmoor Diversified Products is an Imperial front corporation in Lishun used by Lucan's intelligence community. As Trasilon agents, the PCs know this well enough.

The second item establishes a definite connection between Keshiiga and the events on Ambemshan a few weeks ago. She definitely funded Dobzhanski/Ekkair in his failed assassination attempt against the Vargr.

The third item reveals another facet of Keshiiga's plots in the League of Antares. L'ispa is one of the few TL16 worlds in Antares and a producer of sophisticated computer brains. No doubt Keshiiga and INI have been illegally using Coreward Carriers to transport such computers across the border to enemies of the league in Mendan. Kudukara Lines is, after all, a Gashikani company, and the Gashikani are not exactly friendly toward Archduke Brzk.

Finally, the Black Lightning tattoo shows some definite connection between Keshiiga and the recent attacks on Sarar. What that connection is remains to be seen. All in all, the PCs have several pieces of information to help in their investigation.

woman called Jennifer Keshiiga be brought to them. They say she was a member of their group who betrayed them. To that end, they claim responsibility for the recent attacks against Coreward Carriers; they were hoping to find and kill Keshiiga. Supposedly, she is somewhere in the starport, planning to leave Antares for one of the confederations of the Julian Protectorate. Also, they demand safe passage off Sarar and into Imperial Lishun or they will blow up this terminal and the starport with it by means of a thermonuclear device. This threat has yet to be verified.

The hostages are all employees of Coreward Carriers who work at the Lagov city branch office when not doing starport duty. They do not know Keshiiga and have never met her.

Assessment: The head of the league marine contingent, Gwenhwyfar Joule, says she does not believe these people are really part of Black Lightning. Their strategy is too well conceived, and their weapons, high-tech X-ray lasers and a PGMP-14, are hardly terrorist weapons. Joule thinks they must be INI or some other Imperial agency.

Why the terrorists want Keshiiga, whom no one can find, Joule does not know. Still, they must be stopped.

Joule thinks the PCs would be excellent for this assignment since the legal and diplomatic wrangling over jurisdic-

tion between league and Sararian officials could take forever. Semi-independent from league control, the PCs could take the initiative now before it is too late. How they will do this is up to them. Time is of the essence if the bomb threat is true. Who knows when they will set it off? The real Black Lightning is credited with nearly destroying the starport on Tanis (Antares 0507) in 1116. Even if these people are INI or something similar, they may still be mimicking the terrorists' operations. Thus, the PCs should try to keep a few of their opponents alive so as to interrogate them and learn the location of the bomb, if it exists.

What the PCs choose to do is up to them. They should be shown the map of the Coreward Carriers terminal to help make their plan.

COMBAT

At some point, the PCs will engage in combat with the terrorists, who are all well armed and will fight ferociously. At least one of them will surrender rather than be killed.

None of the hostages will be harmed by the terrorists—they serve mainly as a diversion for the PCs.

If things start to look bad, one of the surviving terrorists will make a run for the landing strip outside, heading for the Coreward Carriers freighter named *Ockham's Razor*. Inside is an eighth

terrorist who is holding the captain hostage. The ship holds the TL16 computer technology Keshiiga ordered to Julian space. In the hold, the last two terrorists have placed a thermonuclear device, set to explode in five minutes. They will hold the ship, trying to prevent the PCs from gaining access to and disarming the bomb.

When the player characters defeat these two, the ship captain, Caedmon Arlahanse, will direct them to the bomb. Disarming it is a task:

To disarm the thermonuclear bomb:

Difficult, Electronics, Mechanical, Int, 1 minute (fateful).

Referee: Failure will result in the bomb's detonation and the destruction of all within several kilometers of the landing strip.

THE TRUTH

Eventually, the starport officials will learn that the elusive Jennifer Keshiiga originally registered to leave Sarar for Julian space aboard an InterStarlines vessel, but she canceled her reservations last night. Where she is now is anyone's guess. The surviving terrorist(s) may be interrogated for information to tie this scenario together:

To interrogate the terrorist:

Difficult, Interrogation, Persuasion, 5 minutes.

The "terrorist" is a member of Lucan's INI and was led by Garth Devon. The group was sent to track down Keshiiga, an INI overseer of covert operations in the League of Antares. But she turned on INI and was using her placement at Coreward to make lucrative deals with the Outer States in Mendan sector. Coreward Carriers is innocent. INI arranged for Keshiiga's hiring and placement, and Coreward did not know of either her INI connection or her illegal deals. Eventually, INI suspected that Keshiiga was abusing her position and no longer fulfilling her purpose. INI sent in assassins, disguised as members of Black Lightning to divert suspicion. They attacked several offices of Coreward before they learned that Keshiiga was leaving Sarar on a liner. Thus, they tried to take over the starport to prevent this.

ENDGAME

If the PCs succeed, they will have defeated the terrorists, disarmed the bomb, located a freighter outbound for Julian space with illegal technology, and stopped an INI plot in the League of Antares. All in a day's work for Trasilon.

The illegal technology shipments to the Outer States have been stopped now that Keshiiga is gone. Coreward Carriers has begun an investigation into its employees to locate any more INI plants and stop further crimes against the league. The technology sent Coreward had mostly scientific and medical applications, so it is unlikely to be a threat to the league. Still, it is a breach of security, and Keshiiga is on the loose. Perhaps Trasilon will want that lead investigated and the PCs will journey into Julian space on another assignment for the League of Antares. Ω

Special thanks to members of the History of the Imperium Working Group (HIWG), without whom this adventure would not have been possible, especially Kevin Brennan, Paul Drye, Charles Kimball and J. Duncan Law-Green.

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The Royal Martian Geographical Society wishes to inform the public that its quarterly publication devoted to Victorian Era roleplaying is now available on Earth. Each thirty-two page issue contains:

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By Michael Brines

Ever worry you'll get yourself in a jam your old trusty gauss rifle can't get you out of? Mercenary Supermart stocks maximum firepower at minimum prices! This month we're running a 50% off sale on all grenades, mines and recoilless rifles, with special discounts on flamethrowers! We're overstocked, and everything must sell! Check out these bargains!

One-Use Weapons

Weapon	TL	Weight	Price	Ammo Weight	Ammo Price
Handgrenade HE	4	0.5	4	—	—
Handgrenade HE AP	5	1.0	10	—	—
Smoke grenade	5	0.5	3	—	—
Incendiary grenade	5	1.0	20	—	—
Chemical grenade	6	0.5	6	—	—
4cm Rifle grenade	5	0.4	8	—	—
6cm Rifle grenade	6	0.5	9	—	—
4cm RAM rifle grenade	8	0.6	10	—	—
APERS mine	5	1.0	20	—	—
Bounding APERS mine	5	3.0	75	—	—
Directional mine	6	2.0	250	—	—
Antitank mine	5	14.0	1000	—	—
Chemical mine	5	15.0	1400	—	—
Trip-wire mine	5	1.0	100	—	—

Grenade Launchers and Heavy Weapons

Weapon	TL	Weight	Price	Ammo Weight	Ammo Price
7cm AT GL-6	6	6.0	1500	2.0	45
8cm AT GL-6	6	7.0	3000	2.5	75
9cm AT GT-6	6	8.0	4500	3.0	175
Disposable GL-6	6	2.0	200	—	—
4cm GL-7	7	2.0	500	0.3	5
4cm Auto GL7	7	40.0	5000	0.4	6
4cm RAM GL	8	2.0	1000	0.4	6
4cm RAM Auto GL	8	40.0	10,000	0.5	7
6cm recoilless rifle	6	21.0	7,0500	1.3	75
8cm recoilless rifle	6	67.0	15,000	10.0	300
10cm recoilless rifle	6	152.0	18,000	16.0	450
Flamethrower	5	23.0	11,000	20.0	300

Armor

Armor	TL	Weight	Price	Value
Leather*	1	5.0	75	(1)
Chainmail*	1	25.0	150	2
Plate*	2	35.0	250	3 (3)
Clamshell	11	10.0	10,000	8

*Handmade the traditional way by skilled artisans on Asgard.

Military Weapon Combat Charts

Weapon	Ammo Notes	Rds	Pen/Atten	Dmg	Danger Space	Sig
APERS mine	HE	—	TL+2	8	1	Med
Bounding APERS	HE	—	TL+2	8	6	Med
Directional mine	Flech	—	TL+2/1	8	6/50	Hi
AT mine	HEAP	—	TLx3	40	30	Hi
Chemical mine	*	—	0	*	18	Med
Trip-wire mine	Signal	—	0	1	—	Hi
	Flare	—	0	1	(50)	Hi
	HE	—	TL+2	7	3	Med
Flamethrower	Fire	5	0	10	2	Hi

Maximum range is medium. Recoil is medium. Difficulty as rifle.

*Chemical mine effects depend on the filler—lethal, nonlethal, persistent or nonpersistent agents. One special type of chemical mine is the fou gas mine. When detonated, it spreads flaming petroleum products across the danger space. Another is the paint mine, a Vargr invention, which spreads phosphorescent neon paint across the danger space, ruining the chameleon effect of any battle dress or combat armor unfortunate enough to be on or cross the area.

MILITARY WEAPON NOTES

All mines have low signature until detonated.

An APERS mine explodes if contacted, usually only wounding the person who activated it. A bounding APERS mine has a booster charge which propels it into the air about one meter before detonation.

Antitank mines require a ground pressure of at least 150 kilograms to detonate, so you don't waste 10 kilograms of explosives on one soldier. At TL9, bounding AT mines with magnetic sensors are introduced. These are designed to leap into the air several meters and detonate to catch low-flying grav vehicles. Others are designed with short-range, armor-piercing rockets which fire up into the vehicle's grav plates.

Directional mines are not buried. They are concealed at ground level and detonated by trip-wire or command. The first danger space is a circular area around the mine itself due to the blast. The second is the range of the primary effect. Everyone within a 30-degree-wide cone out to 50 meters is hit by flechettes.

Chemical, directional and AT mines can be command detonated.

Trip-wire mines have three-meter trip-wires attached and are activated if the trip-wire is touched or cut. The signal mine is mainly used as a warning device at night or in poor visibility. The flare acts as a small ILLUM round with only a few seconds' duration.

Clamshell armor is a jacket of combat armor which only protects the torso and groin areas. Ω

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CYBER HEROTM

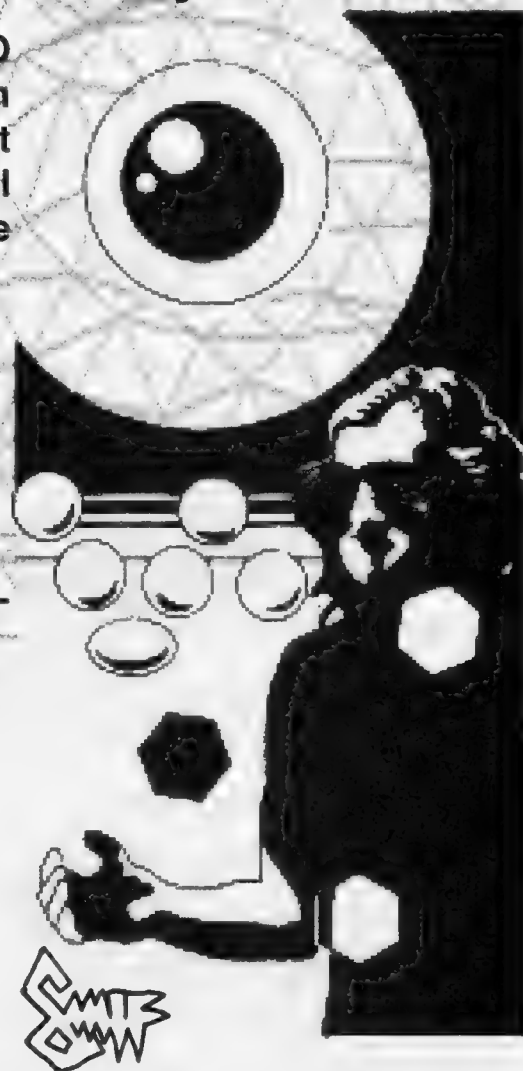
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REDA



BODY STEALERS

Strength: * Education: 3 Move: *
 Constitution: * Charisma: 8 Skill/Dam: *
 Agility: * Empathy: 8 Hits: *
 Intelligence: 8 Initiative: * #Appear: 1

*As per victim

Special: Willpower Drain, Human Empathy, Project Emotion, Darkling Empathy, Possession.

There are 13 of these entities in existence in their portion of their home dimension. Their dimension was originally much larger and inhabited by many types of beings, but a terrible war fragmented the dimension and left many of the inhabitants trapped in these fragments. Most of them died, but many with special empathic powers continued to exist. These body stealers can exist without a physical body in their home dimension and can attack other intelligent living things to steal their bodies. The body that a body stealer tries to possess must be within the body stealer's dimension or in direct contact with it (e.g., via the dimensional scanner).

The Possession attack works as follows: The entity must get a stage of success equal to or greater than the target's original Willpower score on the Power Level Table (page 56 in **Dark Conspiracy**). For example, a body stealer would need a stage three success to take control of a body whose owner had a Willpower of 3. They can use Willpower Drain to make their job easier, of course.

The victim becomes disembodied and trapped in the body stealer dimension. The body stealer has limited access to the victim's memories, but cannot use the victim's skills. A body stealer that is killed outside of its dimension while in a stolen body is permanently destroyed, while one that has a body destroyed within its dimension will be able to try again. Body stealers see humanity solely as a source for bodies.

organic parts require bathing in the slimy gel. It has a three-week supply made. The gel can be made by humans, once it has been analyzed chemically.

It will take the thing in Sands' body 10 days to find the gateway. The gateway is located in a wooded and abandoned section of West Virginia (a two- or three-hour drive from Columbus). The long, unexplained trips it will make searching for the gate may make the PCs suspicious.

It will take the thing three days to reactivate this gate, and it will camp in the woods and not return to the SPW. During this time, it will have to kill six people for "parts" and will steal electronic equipment. There will be news reports of the six killings. The trash papers will have headlines like "Brainy Killer Steals Minds," "Ghost of Neurosurgeon has Returned to Kill, says Psychic" and so forth. The more reputable papers and news services will report the killings and note the fact that parts of victims' nervous systems were removed prior to their deaths. According to the autopsy reports, the removal work was done by someone with a great deal of surgical skill.

STONES

The dimensional portal consists of four stones arranged in a square. The stones are black and seem to absorb the light. They are nearly perfect cubes. The interior of each cube contains an array of bizarre circuits, many of which look like living things. The parts from the victims have also been incorporated into the cubes to replace damaged circuits. A person with an Empathy rating of 1 or higher will be able to sense the location of the mechanism to open a cube. The exterior material of each cube is very damage resistant (it would require antivehicle weapons to breach a cube).

The stones feature prominently in local legends. According to these legends, evil spirits came from a land of darkness and built the stones as a doorway to their land. These evil spirits stole away people and brought them into the land of darkness. When these people returned, they were not the same. The evil spirits plagued the land for a year until the local tribes banded together, driving them back into their dark land, and a great shaman closed the doorway.

What really occurred was that a human with a very high Empathy rating who had the ability to "see" into other dimensions contacted the dimension and was taken over like Sands was

centuries later. The thing controlling that person used the body to construct a gateway and lured people through it, where they were taken over by others of its kind. Eventually, the tribes got together and killed the possessed people, and their shaman, who had great empathic abilities, was able to shut the gate. The entities outside the gate died with their stolen bodies, since they could not exist without them in this dimension. Those few that escaped back home were disembodied as their stolen bodies died of thirst.

HOUNDS IN THE NIGHT

The thing's first attempt to open a gateway to its home dimension will fail. Instead, the gate will open to another dimension, and six shadow hounds will be released. They will go on a killing spree until they are destroyed. The attacks of the shadow hounds will make the news. Survivors will report horrible shapes that seemed vaguely like large hounds tearing people apart before their eyes.

The hounds will hunt each night, with each hound hunting in its own area. During the day, they will hole up in abandoned buildings. Naturally, the PCs will want to get involved. If the reports of the attacks are checked, it will be found that they are occurring in an expanding circle. Naturally, the gateway is at the center of the circle. The opening of the gate will give people who have an Empathy rating of 1 or higher bad dreams, and those with Foreboding skill will sense that something is wrong. The degree of success will determine what amount of information is acquired. The exact information revealed is left up to the referee.

BODY SNATCHING

The second time the thing opens the gate, it will locate its dimension. It will contact its fellows and inform them of its plans. It will then set out to capture humans alive and bring them through the gateway to provide bodies for its fellows. It will continue this until all 12 of its fellows have bodies, and then it will close down the gate, leaving the helpless spirit of Sands trapped there.

The disappearances will be noted in the local news. The details of the snatchings and any PC investigations are left to the referee.

The entity will act in an intelligent manner and will do its best to avoid being caught or leaving evidence. However, it is pretty much a stranger to Earth's dimension and will be ignorant about many things (like how advanced human forensic technology is), which

may lead it into trouble.

If the entities are unchecked, they will begin a campaign of subtle evil. Their style is to take control of areas by gaining control of key people. Control may be gained of the person through conventional means (bribes, blackmail and so forth) or by bringing them into the entities' dimension and stealing the person's body. The entities live to do evil and gain extreme pleasure and satisfaction by doing evil for evil's sake. Like many other Dark entities, they actually draw some sustenance from the pain, suffering and horror of others. They are also big on revenge, so if any of the 13 entities escape, they will eventually return for vengeance.

FINISH

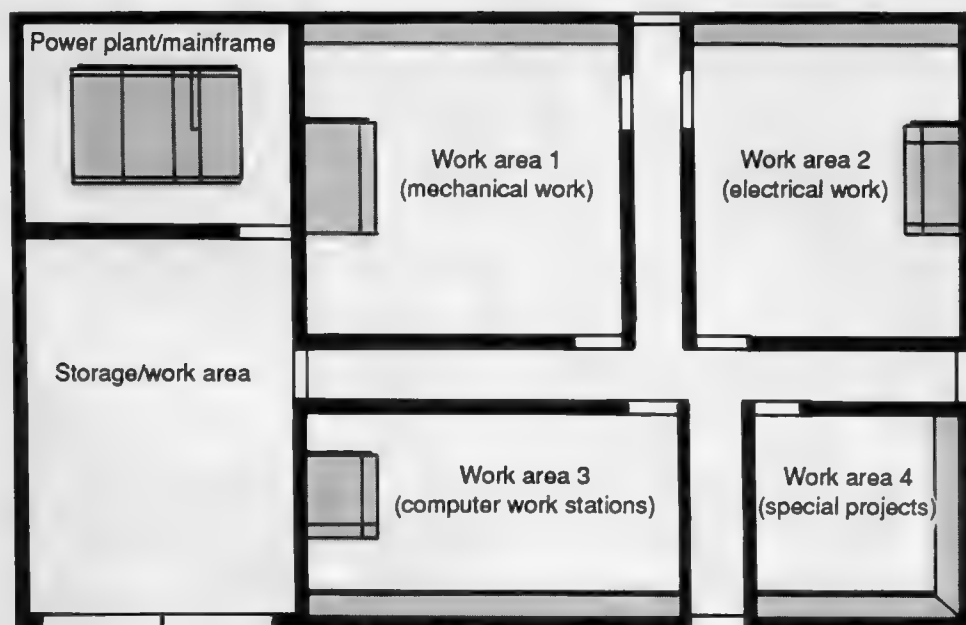
If the 13 entities have been killed (by destroying their stolen bodies while they are outside of their home dimension), the PCs have won a major victory. If some of them escape but their gate is destroyed, they will begin building a new one (this will take years to do) and will be looking for a chance for revenge. If some of them escape but their gateway is undestroyed, they will move the gate to a secure location. They will then seek revenge against the PCs.

Unfortunately, any humans who had

their bodies stolen will be trapped in the entities' dimension. They will be unable to take over another body or their own, unless they have the ability to do so (which most

humans don't). Of course, the next research project at SPW might be to find a way to get the people back, but that is something left for the future. Ω

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By Craig Sheeley

BUGHUNT



Whenever there is
war,
there will be refugees—
even in AD 2300.
Indeed, the swiftness of
advanced assault more
than matches the speed
of transport to take non-
combatants away
from the
death
and destruction. And
even when they do
escape,
the planetwide nature
of modern mobile
warfare just means that
the war sometimes
catches up with them
somewhere else.

RICK HARRIS
'92

The PCs are on Eta Bootis IIc, otherwise known as *Aurore*. They were doing business with the colonists (either as part of another adventure, or just delivering supplies as independent cargo carriers, etc.) when the battle lines shifted. In short, the Kafers broke out and began deep-penetration raids to the French rear. Like everyone else not actively engaged in shooting bugs, the PCs tried to put more distance between them and the front, heading further into the rear areas.

They stopped for food and fuel at a refugee camp that had been established months ago for evacuees from the front areas. The camp is in an uproar about the possibility of Kafer attack—these people have few weapons and less transport. Trucks have been promised, but the fluid nature of the situation (translation: utter chaos) has interfered with the trucks' arrival.

The camp's director, Michelle DuBois, is happy to have the PCs there for the night. Their armaments and self-confidence are morale boosters, despite their stories of Kafer encroachment. The campers feel better for a squad of healthy, heavily armed soldiers (that's how they see the PCs), for the soldiery of the camp consists of a section of walking wounded French regulars convalescing in the camp's medical infirmary.

The PCs are fairly certain that they've left the Kafers pretty far behind, and they shouldn't be in danger for a day or so. This means they'll have enough time to rest for a night and continue on the next day toward civilization (and the spaceport where they can hop off this bug-ridden rock!). So they're taking it easy, wowing the refugees with horror stories of the front, bragging about the scrapes they've been through and enjoying a quiet evening without straining an ear (or other hearing organ) to listen for enemy fire.

The bugs have other ideas.

EQUIPMENT

Most PC groups will have more heavy armament and vehicles than they can man. In case of a group that doesn't, they should have a minimum of equipment that they've picked up from the battlefield (so they don't have to pay for it):

Sidearms: Anyone who doesn't have a sidearm should have a Traylor Model 57 pistol. Each pistol has three loaded clips of ammo.

Longarms: Anyone who doesn't have a rifle and wants one may have a Wu-Beijing Type-49 assault rifle (supplied to the *Aurore* garrison to use up all that surplus 7.5mm ammo). Each rifle has six loaded clips of ammo.

Armor: Anyone who doesn't have better

armor may have an inertial armor vest with vedette half-armor shoulder protection, and a helmet.

Heavy Weapons: Unless they have some, the PCs may have their choice of two FAM-90 rifles with seven ammo clips and 15 30mm propelled grenades (four HEAP, eight HE and three concealment), or a Wu-Beijing Type 381 MG with two 150-round ammo cassettes, or a Type 1 high-energy assault gun with 12 power cells. In addition, the PCs get two Guiscard Blindicide-3 missiles.

Grenades: The PCs have picked up four concealment grenades, two concussion grenades and six HE frag grenades.

Vehicles: Unless they have something better, the PCs have commandeered a Bridgeport Swift Warbird utility hovercraft (same as the Songbird, but with less comfortable accommodations and a pintle mount on the rear roll bar).

MIDNIGHT ASSAULT

The PCs, like the rest of the camp, are asleep when the Kafers come calling. Around midnight, the Kafers come down the road in their crawlers and run into the camp—there aren't any lights showing in the camp (black-out conditions), the drivers don't see too well at night and the lead crawler literally slams through the chain-link fence and into the latrine tent! The other crawler careens to a halt behind the first, and the Kafers stumble out as way of deployment.

This commotion wakes the entire camp, causing everyone to run around in blind panic and confusion. This includes the Kafers, who have no idea whatsoever of what they've run into! The two "officers" dance among their troops, liberally bashing them with their "shock prods" to turn on their brains.

In other words, both forces take some time to perceive and react to the threat at hand. For the Kafers, this is going to take 1D6 turns (30-180 seconds). For the humans, the stunned refugee forces take 2D6 turns to get together and muster for action.

The PCs, who are a little more paranoid after having been in the war zone, react more swiftly. Roll 2D6 for each PC and subtract the PC's Coolness Under Fire from the roll. If the result is positive, that is how many turns the PC takes to wake up, figure out that they're under attack and grab his gear. If the result is 0 or less, the PC bounds up from the cot, weapons in hand.

Putting on armor takes extra time: slapping on a vest, helmet or vedette armor takes 30 seconds (one combat turn); slipping into a breastplate or full-body nonrigid/inertial armor takes 60 seconds (two combat turns); crawling into full-body combat armor or (gaspl) a walker takes 180 seconds (six combat turns).

The Kafers, once they've come to grips

that this is a combat situation, spread out into five-man fire teams and start mowing a random and thorough path of destruction through the refugee camp. The crawlers also advance, blasting buildings and people with their beamer plasma-gun turrets.

The complexion of the engagement changes when the PCs or the walking wounded (WW) French troopers actually start shooting at the Kafers. The aliens scatter in their five-man groups and start fighting a "bounding overwatch" battle—one fire team supports another's advance, and the advancing squad ducks and dodges, seeking cover. Once under cover, the advancing squad hunkers down and provides cover fire for the first squad, which advances. In the meantime, the two crawlers back off to the edge of the mapboard and spray observed human weapons positions with plasma fire.

Since the battle takes place in darkness, lit only by fires and weapons discharge, the Kafers are at a distinct disadvantage. All their weapons fire tasks are Formidable, except for the beamer gunners in the crawlers (who have thermal-imaging gunsights, allowing them normal gunnery). Kafer soldiers tend to aim for gunflashes, particularly steady ones, and fire in teams—so if someone is using a chemical-projectile weapon on steady autofire, an entire Kafer team targets him! Beamer gunners look for heavy weapons in particular to shoot.

Of course, the darkness doesn't do the humans much good, either. Humans shooting at Kafers during the fight have their weapons-fire difficulty raised to Difficult unless they have low-light vision gear.

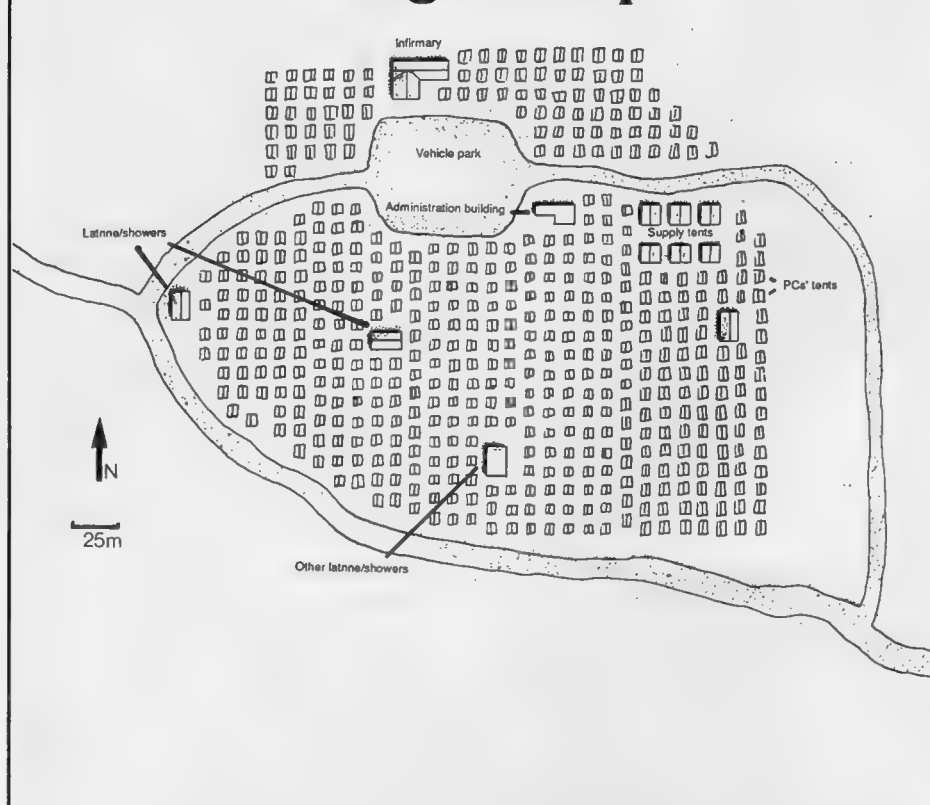
The Kafers' goal is to get to hand-to-hand grips with the human defenders, where the Kafers are certain they can wipe out the soft-skinned with their superior strength. Besides, at close quarters, a Kafer can actually see its opponent, which is much more comfortable to the aliens than shooting at flickering lights on the edge of their visual range. They hope to destroy all the humans here, and they will retreat only if both officers are killed.

In the meantime, the PCs have to try to either fight off the Kafers or fight their way to the vehicle park in hopes of escape. Either way, the PCs have to deal with trigger-happy Kafers (who fortunately aren't interested in singling out vehicles over tents for destruction) and the panicked refugees, who run around screaming and generally getting in the PCs' way. Tender-hearted PCs (that is to say, PCs who could be considered normal in terms of human kindness) will be plagued with the urge to assist the refugees, confronted with innocent people injured and mangled by Kafer fire and grenades.

MAP

Most of the structures on the map aren't solid structures at all, they're plastic tents. A

Refugee Camp



tent constitutes soft cover, but won't stop a bullet, shell or beam. The tent plastic only burns when great heat is applied (i.e., a hit by a laser or plasma gun).

The tent city is built in a shallow valley. The terrain to the north and south slopes gently upwards, and is covered with thick undergrowth and some trees. The road to the west makes a sharp turn to the north about 50 meters off the map; this hairpin turn is one of the reasons the Kafer drivers didn't spot the camp until they ran into it.

Latrine/Showers: This is the building that the first Kafer crawler crashes into. The building is subsequently reduced to kindling.

Administration Building: This plastic pre-fab building houses DuBois' office and records. Its tough construction gives it an Armor Value of 0.5.

Infirmary: Another plastic pre-fab with an Armor Value of 0.5, the infirmary houses the French troopers, as well as other injured and sick patients. The troopers try to get away from the infirmary building before they start any hostilities, because they know the Kafers won't hesitate to blast the building if they think there's a threat there.

Vehicle Park: The PCs' vehicle is parked here, along with a range truck and a heavy truck belonging to Disaster Administration.

PCs' Tents: This is where the PCs are sleeping when the Kafers drop in. This is also where all the PCs' gear and weapons are. And no, they're *not* sleeping in their armor!

Other Latrine/Showers: These buildings have not had heavy alien crawlers crash into them, and they are still intact. The heavy plastic construction of these buildings confers Armor Value 1 for cover benefit.

Supply Tents: These oversized tents store the camp's supplies, sealed in plastic crates. The crates make good hard cover, giving an Armor Value of 0.9 to those hiding behind them.

NPCs

Michelle DuBois, Camp Director: DuBois was a management trainee when the war broke out. Since then, she has managed to gain enough experience to cope with the problems of managing a refugee camp and winking supplies out of the Disaster Administration. She's slender, calm and courteous, and confidently competent. She's no shrinking violet when it comes to combat. She's an Experienced NPC, with an inertial armor vest and a Mueller-Rivera P-3 laser pistol.

NPC Motivation Results: Heart 5: Loyal. Diamond 2: Cost-conscious.

French Walking Wounded: The eight soldiers are much better warriors than they appear; their wounds prevent them from acting at full capacity. They operate in two four-man fire teams of Novice NPCs (they really shouldn't be engaging in strenuous activity). Each team is identically equipped: two men with Wu-Beijing Type-49 assault rifles, one man with a DunArmCo close

assault gun and one man with a GW-12 grenade launcher and two magazines (one concealment, one flechette and four HE grenades per magazine). All men wear full-body inertial armor and a helmet.

Kafers: The Kafers split into squads of five during battle. Two of the squads contain an officer, three thud gun troopers and a donderbus trooper. The other two squads contain three thud gun troopers, one donderbus trooper and one flashlight trooper. The vehicle drivers remain in the crawlers. The officers are Elite Kafers, armed with horse pistols, cattle prods, three hand grenades and helmets. The drivers and troops are Veteran Kafers. The vehicle drivers are armed with combat knives and horse pistols. The troopers are armed with combat knives, three hand grenades apiece and their specialty weapon. Each Kafer trooper has one magazine of propelled grenades for its gun and enough regular ammo to last the engagement.

KAFER GEAR

Horse Pistol: (Bulk=0) Magazine: 6 rounds ROF: 5. Aimed Fire Range: 80 meters Area Fire Burst: 3 rounds (AFV=0.25) Area Fire Range: 40 meters DP Value: 0.9.

Combat Knife: Melee Range: Short Melee Skill Modifier: +2 DP Value: 0.1.

Thud Gun: 12.1mm slug (Bulk=2) Magazine: 66 rounds ROF: 2 Aimed Fire Range: 500 meters Area Fire Burst: 10 (AFV=1.5) Area Fire Range: 300 meters DP Value: 1.1. 27.2mm grenade launcher Magazine: 9 rounds ROF: 2 Aimed Fire Range: 600 meters DP Value: As explosion (EP=4).

Donderbus: (Bulk=2) Magazine: 8 rounds ROF: 2 Aimed Fire Range: 85 meters Area Fire Burst: 4 rounds (AFV=0.8) Area Fire Range: 65 meters DP Value: 19mm shotgun shell 0.5 (x6), 19mm propelled grenade as tamped explosion (EP=3).

Flashlight: 75-01 laser (Bulk=2) Action: Single-shot Pulse Magazine: 12 shots Aimed Fire Range: 1300 meters DP Value: 2. 27.2mm grenade launcher Magazine: 9 rounds ROF: 2 Aimed Fire Range: 600 meters DP Value: As explosion (EP=4).

Hand Grenade: DP Value: As explosion (EP=3).

Beamer: Action: Single-shot Magazine: 100 shots Aimed Fire Range: 2000 meters DP Value: As tamped explosion (EP=5).

Crawler I: Kafer all-purpose tracked APC. Crew: Driver Weight: 4500 kg Armor: Suspension: 0.8 All Faces: 1.1 Signature: 8 Evasion: 0 Sensor Range: 6 km Cargo: 10 passengers and 2000 kg Max Speed: 80 kph Cruising Speed: 40 kph Combat Movement: 160 meters Off-Road Mobility: Full Power Plant: Hydrogen fuel cell, approximately 0.2 MW Fuel Capacity: 04 kg Fuel Consumption: 6 kg/hour Endurance: 34 hours. Ω

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ZONED OUT

BY
CHRISTOPHER E.
WOLF





DEEP GREEN

Terrorist Leader

Name: Jasper

Bod: 3

Quickness: 4

Strength: 3

Charisma: 5

Intelligence: 5

Willpower: 3

Essence: 3.5

Reaction: 4 (6)+1D6

Skills: Armed Combat: 3, Car: 2, Demolitions: (B/R) 3, Firearms: 6, Psychology: 4, Unarmed Combat: 4, Leadership: 5, Negotiation: 4

Cyberware: Smartgun link, wired reflexes 1

Gear: IWS Bountyman (Ares Predator) with smartgun link, armor clothing, FN-HAR assault rifle with smartgun link

Average Terrorist

Same stats as leader, but without Leadership or Negotiation skill.

Watcher Spirit

Force: 6

Toxic Earth Spirit

Force: 5

Bod: 8

Quickness: 2x2

Strength: 8

Charisma: 1

Intelligence: 4

Willpower: 5

Essence: 4A

Reaction: 7/12

Attacks: 4S3+1 reach, Special

Powers: Alienation, concealment, corrosive secretions, fear, manifestation, noxious breath

The snatch and grab went like clockwork. Just a few more hours of waiting in this gopping jamhole, then Zeta-Impchem gets spammed, a payback they're long-overdue. Jasper looked over at the young Elven girl strapped to the cot. She groaned and weakly struggled to regain consciousness. The prison drug in her system was working—that should keep her harmless for awhile.

Suddenly, the sound of heavy artillery pounded outside the steel-plated access door of the warehouse. Jasper grabbed for his Bountyman and clicked off the safety. Get a grip, chummer, he told himself. It's just another day in the Squeeze, and the Surfers are just taking care of business as usual.

This adventure was specifically designed for use with FASA's *London Sourcebook*, but with slight modification, it can be used in any city. The group will need at least one mage (preferably hermetic), but will not need a decker.

The story begins with Julia Saint-Smythe (the daughter of Lord Reginald Saint-Smythe, earl of Cameiliard, being abducted by members of Deep Green, ecological terrorists of radical disposition. The terrorists, however, are not really in control of the situation—they are being set-up by a Toxic Druid group, which plans to kill them and take the hostage to be used as the main sacrifice in a blood ritual.

LOUNGING LIZARDS!

The characters are contacted by a fixer called James the Silent, who informs them of a job. James has a reputation for representing "clients" of noble background. Most of the jobs are highly dangerous, but the payment usually matches the risk.

If the characters accept his offer, James will inform them that a black Nightsky with a gold diamond crest emblazoned on the hood will arrive within the hour to pick them up. A meeting will take place at the Lounging Lizard nightclub, a place the characters have never heard of and would never be able to find on their own. The Lounging Lizard is a members-only corporate nightclub and is well protected by a hermetic ward, with physical muscle to back up the magical defenses.

The characters will be led to a private room in the back, where they will meet with James the Silent, a man in his late forties, very much overweight and dressed in the latest fashionable, corporate-style suit. James will allow them to order what they wish from the bar, and

once they are served, he'll get right to the point.

He tells them that a few hours ago, Julia Saint-Smythe was abducted by Deep Green agents while she was leaving her flat in South Kensington. The job consists of finding Julia and rescuing her from the terrorists. His "client" is offering £30,000 plus an additional £10,000 if the characters keep the job quiet enough to stay out of the trash-faxes.

If the characters do not accept the job (their loss!), they will be detained, then magic and mind-altering drugs will be used on them to erase all knowledge of this meeting. If the characters accept the job, James will show them a holo-pic of Julia. She's Elven, blonde, 20 years old and looks like a simsense starlet. Any mages in the group who pass an INT success test at target number 4 will realize that some of the pieces of jewelry she's wearing are spell foci.

The last instructions from James are that when the girl is safe, the PCs should call BTG# (717) 555-8238, and a team will show up to pay them and take the girl. He will then bid the PCs good-day and have them escorted to the Nightsky they arrived in and transported to their original pickup point.

THE SQUEEZE

Julia is being held captive in the Lambath Containment Zone, a.k.a. The Squeeze. The Squeeze is the UK version of the Redmond Barrens in Seattle (for more information on The Squeeze, see the *London Sourcebook*, pages 109-114).

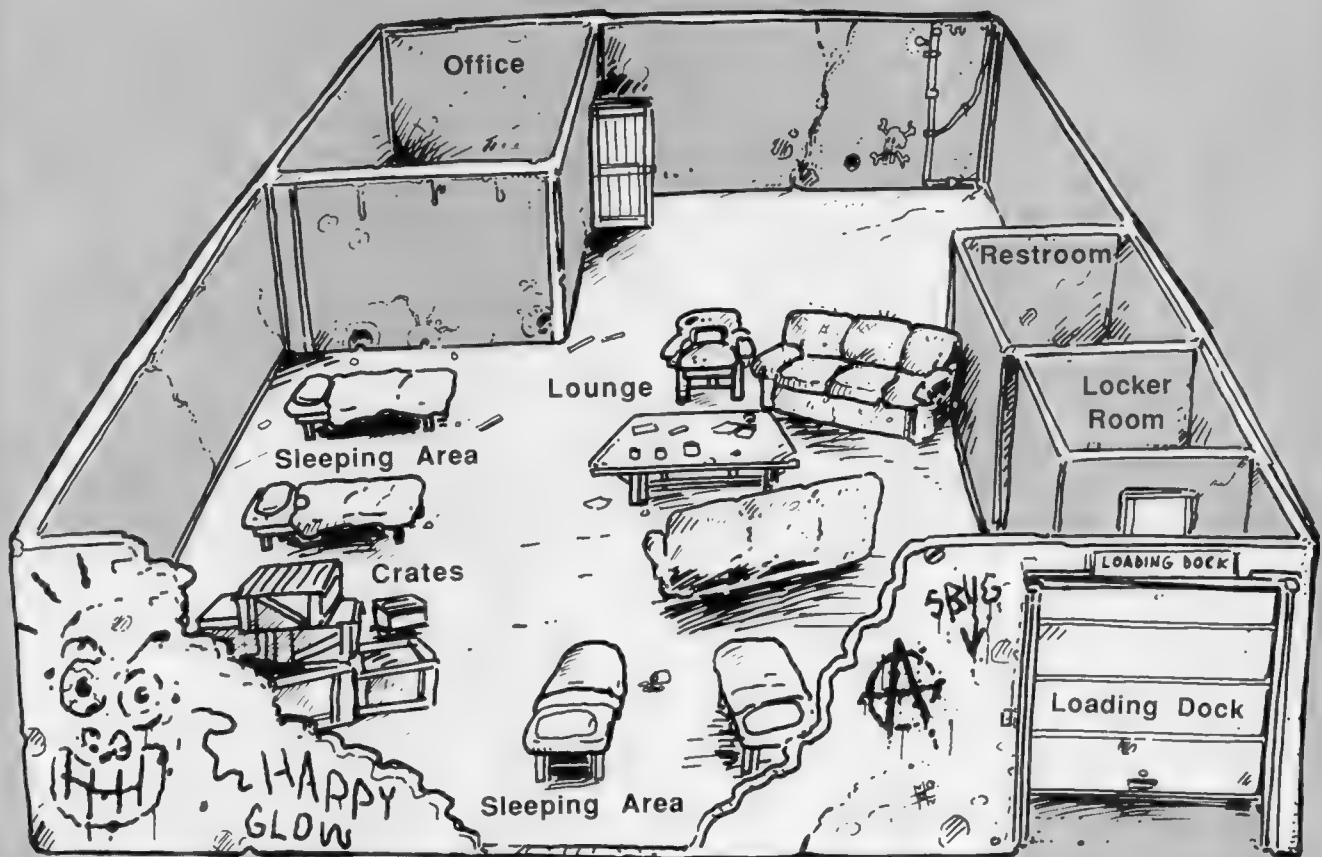
The terrorists are holed-up in an abandoned warehouse (what else?) in the New Cross district. It has a security rating of F. Whenever the characters enter and leave The Squeeze, roll for an encounter on the Squeeze Encounters Table.

Encounters in The Squeeze

2D6 Result

2-3 **Magic:** The characters encounter what looks like a young woman trying to comfort a group of hideously deformed children. The children are actually 42-24 victims that live in the alleys and streets of The Squeeze. The young woman is a free spirit that has taken pity on the children. If the characters offer to help in some way, the spirit will grant them one wish within her power. If the runners ignore the children or abuse them in some way, she

Terrorist Hideout



will curse them and throw Alienation on the offending characters.

4-8 **Gang:** The PCs run into the middle of a gang war between the New Cross Surfers and the Brixton Boys. As soon as the runners appear, the Brixton gang takes off, thinking the runners are the Surfers' backup. The Surfers are suspicious of the runners but offer to lead them to the Deep Green hideout for a small fee—50% of the gear the runners get from the terrorists.

9-10 **Beggar:** 42-24 victim begging for food.

11 **Animal:** The runners are attacked by a pair of Gargoyles. *Bod:* 10/3, *Q:* 4x3, *S:* 8, *I:* 2/4, *W:* 4, *E:* 5, *R:* 3, *Attk:* (STR)S2. *Powers:* Concealment, enhanced physical attributes (strength, once per day for 5D6 turns), noxious breath. *Vulnerability:* Iron.

12 **Underworld:** A fixer offers to hook the runners up with some black market weapons. Whether this guy is legit or not is up to the gamemaster.

TERRORIST HIDEOUT

The Deep Green terrorist hideout is a small, abandoned warehouse in the New Cross District of The Squeeze. It is a single-story building. The interior walls are made of normal construction plastic (barrier rating 4). All the windows have been covered with thick impact plastic (barrier rating 10), and all exterior doors are reinforced steel sheet (barrier rating 24). The locks are heavy bolt, tooled steel. STR test to break the lock is target number 10.

The Toxic Druid group that hired the terrorists has placed a Watcher spirit to keep an eye on them. When the player characters attack the Deep Green members, the Watcher will report the outcome to its masters immediately following the battle. A Toxic Earth spirit, force 5, has been placed outside the building with orders to attack anyone who leaves the warehouse with the girl, including the terrorists. However, the girl is not to be harmed in any way. Damaged goods do not make good sacrifices.

The number of Deep Green members is double the size of the party, plus one leader.

Locker Room: Used by warehouse employees when the place was in operation.

Office: Empty.

Crates: These are old, rotting and empty. If someone hides behind them, they will provide hard cover.

Lounge: This area provides minimal comfort, with a table, some chairs and two couches. The terrorists will most likely be in this area.

Sleeping Area: This area has a few flimsy screens for privacy. This is where Julia is strapped to a cot. One terrorist will guard her at all times. Julia will not be much help to her rescuers—she has been pumped full of drugs to keep her from doing any magic. If the characters have a medkit, they may be able to bring her back to consciousness, but will she be at a +4 modifier for all her tests.

DON'T CALL US...

If the characters are successful in their rescue of Julia, they will eventually find themselves calling the phone number James gave them. The phone will be answered by James, who will inform them that a team will be dispatched immediately to pick up the girl and pay the runners.

However, the Druids have dispatched their own team to get the girl from the runners. This Druidic strike force con-



DRUIDIC STRIKE FORCE

Team Leader

Name: Ian MacGregor

Initiate Grade: 1 New Druid Movement

Bod: 2 (4)

Quickness: 4

Strength: 2

Charisma: 4

Intelligence: 5

Willpower: 5

Essence: 5.1

Magic: 6

Reaction: 4 (8)+1D6

Skills: Conjuring: 3, Etiquette (Druidic): 2, Firearms: 3, Magical Theory: 4, Sorcery: 6, Unarmed Combat: 2

Spells: Manaball: 5, Powerball: 5, Clairvoyance: 5, Detect Enemies: 2, Detect Guns: 4, Personal Combat Sense: 5, Heal Moderate Wounds: 3, Increased Reaction +2, Mask: 3, Armor: 5, Confusion: 4, Power Focus: 1 (Golden Sicle), Spell Lock: Armor/2 successes, Spell Lock: Personal Combat Sense/4 successes

Cyberware: Boosted reflexes 1, cybereyes with thermographic/lowlight

Gear: Armor jacket, flash packs (3), HK227 SMG with laser sight, 50 rounds standard ammo

Second In Command

Name: Kinslayer

Use Elven street samurai stats on page 104 of the *Street Samurai Catalog*.

Average Druidic Agent

Use the average terrorist stats.

sists of team leader Ian MacGregor, an Elven street samurai named Kinslayer and a number of regular agents equal to the PC group.

The Druids have sent a second team to intercept and dispose of the team sent by James.

If the characters have neutralized the Watcher, the Druid team will start searching for the characters immediately, then attack as soon as possible, in order to gain the element of surprise.

If the Watcher wasn't neutralized, it will lead the Druid team right to the characters, where they will pretend to be the contact team James is sending.

Below are some possible ways the characters might be tipped off that they are impostors:

- If the characters previously set up a password-counterpassword with James, the false team will not know the correct response (unless it was mentioned in front of the Watcher).

- Unless the characters mention payment, the false team will not have the money.

- Mage characters may decide to do an Aura Sensing, Mind Probe or Analyze Truth.

If the characters fail to cooperate with the Druid team, or as soon as the Druid team can catch the characters off-guard, the Druids will attack the runners, then grab the girl and run.

PICKING UP THE PIECES

If all has gone well, the girl has been handed over to the proper people, the runners got their pounds and everyone is happy—except Roy Chambers. Who?! Roy is the Toxic Shaman who was going to sacrifice Julia to empower a spirit. This failure has decreased his threat rating by one, and he is most unhappy. He knows who is responsible and will be seeking revenge.

Team Karma: Award 2 points for defeating the Toxic Earth Spirit, 1 for neutralizing the Watcher, 1 for surviving the mission, 3 for handing Julia over to the proper people, -5 for giving Julia to the Druids.

Individual Karma: Award a bonus as per the *Shadowrun* rules. Ω

Journeys, the Journal of Multidimensional Roleplaying, is seeking article submissions. We will consider articles on nearly any multigenre roleplaying game by nearly any publisher, including any *Dangerous Journeys* genre, *GURPS*, the *Hero System*, *Torg*, *Amber*, *Dream Park* and other games, as well as cross-genre articles and some few pieces of general interest.

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New Shamanic Totems

The shaman is an intrinsic part of any shadowrun. While the original game provides a lot of very important totems, it fails to consider some of the more interesting characters of the Haida. This article introduces four of the more colorful, and neglected, shamanic entities from the west coast. An experienced game master can add a certain flair to a gaming session by introducing new totems and their human counterparts. It's nice to know that not every shaman has to be Wolf or Dog. So without further adieu, meet Mink, Beaver, Deer and Heron.

BY ANDREW J. LUCAS



Mink (Made-Like-the-Sun)

Mink is the illegitimate son of Sea Lion and Sun. He often disregards his physical shortcomings, attempting tasks far beyond him, to be accepted by others. As might be expected, Mink doesn't always succeed, but in spite of a vicious temper, he has no trouble accepting failure. He has a tenacious demeanor completely at odds with this apparent willingness to admit defeat. He may fail, but he never gives up.

Environment: Mountain or forest (shoreline).

Advantages: +2 dice on any combat spell, +2 dice on any increase attribute spell.

Disadvantages: Mink shaman are always small, the runts of the litter. Because of their lack of stature, they are constantly trying to prove themselves, especially in combat. Mink appears almost exclusively to bastards and orphans. Followers of the Mink totem are well liked by other shaman, sort of like an annoying little brother. Most shaman are considered wise men, and enigmatic sages, except Mink. Perhaps it has something to do with the way they can't pass up a really good dare (must make a Willpower check to avoid).

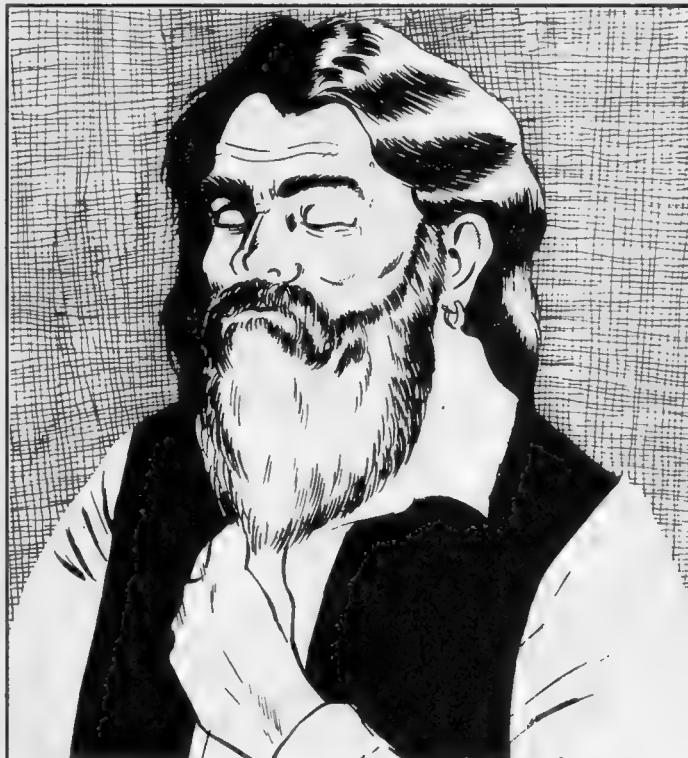
Common Quotes:

"Yeah! Well I can do that just as well."

"Hey guys what's up? REALLY! Good thing I'm here, then,"

"Can so."

"Get your fragging hands off me, ya drek-headed troll!"



Beaver

It comes as no great surprise that Beaver is industrious. What should be stressed is the magnanimous attitude of the totem. Beaver does not think of himself as an entity separated from mankind, but more of an older brother. Like any brother, he occasionally has to show his siblings the proper way to do something, and even punish them when they get out of line. He is usually very helpful and friendly when approached, but will fight like a demon if necessary.

Environment: Forest (stream or lake).

Advantages: +2 dice for conjuring river spirits, +1 die for sustaining spells (one only).

Disadvantages: Beaver shaman are usually short and often overweight in spite of being very fit. Dwarves appear to have an affinity with Beaver, and the majority of them are dwarves. Though it may seem unlikely, Beaver shaman often have two and sometimes even three jobs, in addition to their shamanic studies. They are your classic workaholics and must keep busy. A Beaver shaman is not very good at waiting. They must make periodic Willpower checks (target number GM's discretion) or immediately find something to do, even if it means leaving a stakeout, for example.

Common Quotes:

"I'll get right on it, as soon as I finish up here."

"You need how much? I'd love to help, but I'm overdrawn already."

"Hoi, chummer! Want some soy-kaf? My treat."



Heron (Master-of-Fog)

Heron is known for his grace, patience and dexterity. This totem is prized for his knowledge and the freedom with which he shares it. For the most part, Heron is aloof and does not seek the company of others. He favors his own company and is always seen in the spirit world carrying a bag of fog on his shoulder, from which the lake mist constantly leaks.

Environment: Forest (usually around mountain streams or lakes).

Advantages: +2 dice with detection and illusion spells, +2 dice to increase dexterity spells.

Disadvantages: Heron shamans are natural hermits. While not in anyway antisocial, they prefer to live apart from the masses and study the spirit world. As such, they suffer -1 die to cast any spell while in an urban environment.

It is rare, but not unheard of, to find Heron followers in Seattle. This intense, almost manic, study makes them much sought after by shamanic researchers. In fact, it is rumored that Daniel Howling Coyote consulted with an ancient Heron sage before instigating the Great Ghost Dance in 2010.

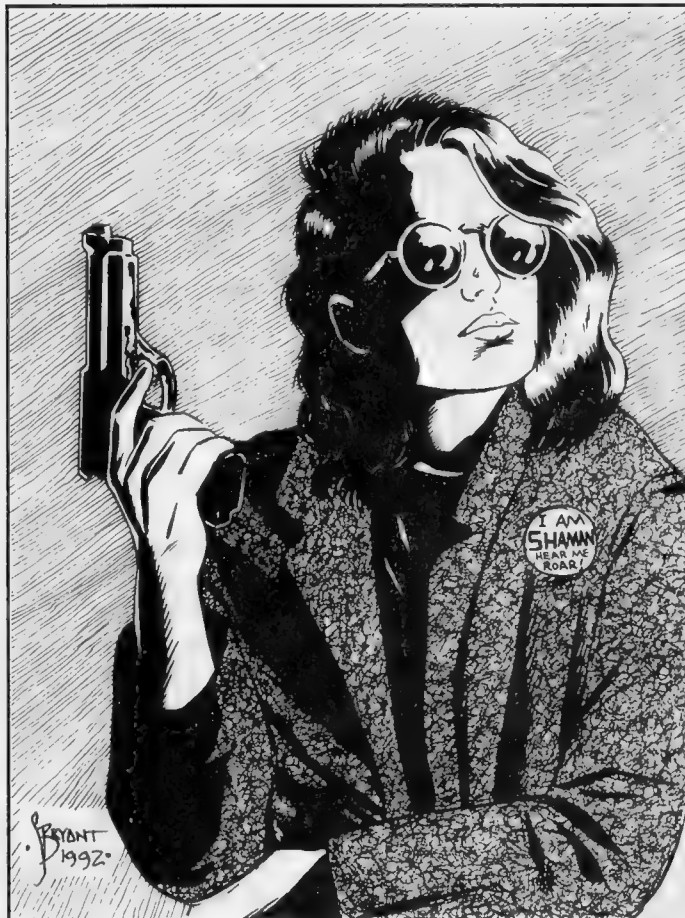
Common Quotes:

"Hey! Guns don't kill. People do. How did I know what the kid wanted the fireball for?"

"I think that's possible. Ask me in a week or so."

"Could you pass that book please?"

"Well, now. That's very interesting. It reminds me of the tale of...."



Deer

Deer is by far the most inquisitive of all totems—even more so than Raven. And he shares Raven's habit of getting himself hurt by giving his curiosity full rein. This totem has always been linked with innovation and discovery. In fact, Deer is credited with the discovery of fire by his followers. Deer likes to think of himself as a provider and will always put his people before himself. This self sacrifice is completely at odds with the huge ego and incredible vanity of Deer.

Environment: Forest.

Advantages: +2 dice for researching new or innovative spells, +2 dice to conjure forest spirits.

Disadvantages: Curiosity and vanity are commonplace in shamans of Deer. Life is always good for Deer. But when you're sure you can do anything, how could it be anything but. Overconfidence and a short attention span make these shamans appear flighty. If the shaman stumbles across a discovery (magical or otherwise) which would benefit mankind, he must roll vs. Intelligence if he tries to conceal it from the public. This is to reflect the internal rationalization that the character is undergoing to justify hiding the discovery. Deer shamans are often part-time journalists or PIs. Wolf shamans have an unusual rapport with Deer completely at odds with any mundane notion of the proper order of things. But then people are not animals, and shamanic totems are so much more.

Common Quotes:

"How do you like my new Colt Manhunter? I think the chrome goes well with my blouse."

"Portable fusion generators! How can Aztechnology call this a corporate secret? It should be shared with all the people!!!"

"I never should have opened that box. Hey, what's this?"

N-E-C-R-O-N-O-M-I-C-O-N. Looks good. I wonder who the author is?" Ω

Collins Third Street-Slang Dictionary

By David Perry

The cyberpunk genre introduces myriad new concepts for gamers to master. But understanding a situation often depends on understanding the language used to describe it. Hence, the book of answers for those who have a need to know.

Ace of Spades: Solo term for death in combat. To "draw the ace" is to die in combat.

B.B.: Abbreviation of either "Big Brother" or "Boys in Black." Refers to Arasaka security guards. Also referred to as "The Brother."

Berserkide: Any combat drug. Especially used to describe Black Lace. Also referred to as "freakers."

Blood Money: Money received in return for the illegal sale of organs to a body bank.

Blue Moon: Honest Night City cop.

Brother: Refers to Arasaka security guards. Also referred to as "Big Brother" or "B.B."

Buck Rogers: Any solo obsessed with lasers, microwavers and other high-tech weaponry. This is *not* a complimentary term.

Chrome-Bangers: Term for the cyberpsycho squad. Also called "Circuit Breakers."

Ferry-Man: Term for a high-level assassin. Believed to be derived from the famed Euro-solo, Charon, who took his name from the figure in Greek mythology who ferried the dead across the river Styx to Hades.

Flea: Netrunner slang for any non-netrunner who accompanies a netrunner on a run in the Net by using a Trode set.

Fuse: To kill someone possessing large quantities of cyberware. Also "short-circ" or "download."

Garbage Detail: Corporate slang for a retaliatory raid, usually against a street-gang or street-Ronin, which takes the corporate solos into non-corporate controlled parts of the city. Also known as a "trash run."

Gibson: Generic term for any unexplained phenomena in the Net.

Also "Ghosts in the Machine."

Guardian Angel: Solo on a body-guard job. Also "bullet stopper."

Harry: Complimentary term applied to a particularly lethal piece of hardware (i.e., "That's a Harry of a gun"). Originated from a late-20th-century vidflick.

Leash: A corporate safeguard implanted into an employee to ensure loyalty and continued service. Cortex bombs and sabotage chipware are common examples.

Leeches: Street-docs or med-techs.

Liquidizer: Any weapon capable of inflicting obscene amounts of damage to the human body. Particularly automatic shotguns.

Lector: Complimentary term used by booster-gang members about a nongang member when impressed by that person's ability to perform act of violence. The only thing that impresses Boosters.

Morningstar: Generic term for incendiary grenades or devices.

Muzak-Man: A rocker who has sold out to an entertainment corporation. Also "synth-soul" or "castrato."

Net Fet: Abbreviation of Net fetishist. A netrunner who can only relate to life in the Net.

Poppers: Weaponry concealed in a cyberlimb.

Quakers: Missiles or rockets.

Rock: To kick or punch someone violently, especially to kick or punch the person in the head. Believed to derive from the "Jailhouse Rock" fighting style (i.e., "I rocked his head off").

Shredder: Minigun or autocannon.

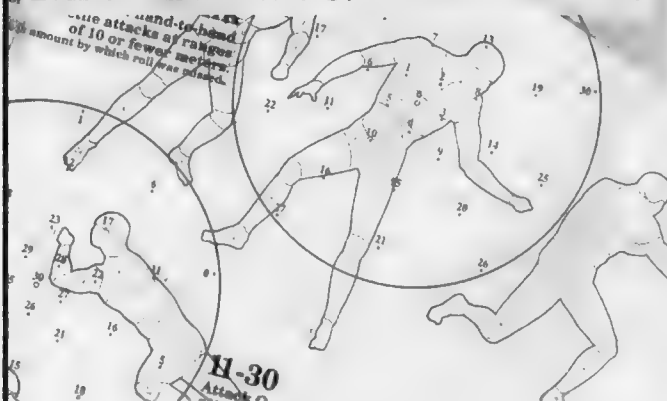
Swarm: Large nomad convoy.

Trash Run: Corporate slang for a retaliatory raid, usually against a street-gang or street-Ronin, which takes the corporate solos into non-corporate-controlled parts of the city. Also known as a "garbage detail."

Twitchers: Tasers and, by extension, any electricity-based weapon.

Valkyrie: Assault helicopter or hover vehicle in attack mode. Believed to derive from a scene in the 20th-century classic vidflick "Apocalypse Now." Ω

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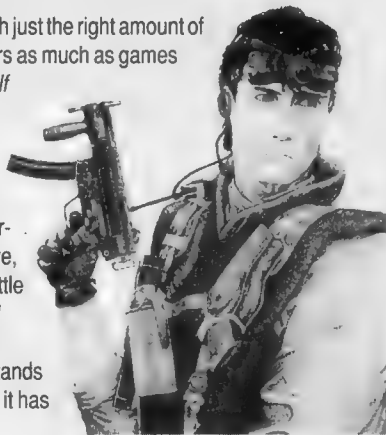
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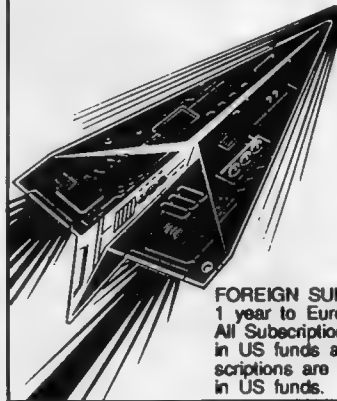
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Hauling a ravenous wildebeest, placating a menacing loan shark, and breaking into the black market get the PCs deeper and deeper into trouble in this action-packed adventure • By Wallace D. Greer

PARTS IS PARTS

T

his adventure is intended to serve as an introduction to *Star Wars Galaxy Guide Six: Tramp*

Freighters, Minos Cluster campaign. A beginning group of characters is ideal for this adventure. At least one of the player characters should start out with the Tramp Freighter Captain template and a stock light freighter. Remember that the maximum number of crew and passengers aboard this ship is eight, and space for excessive amounts of equipment is lacking. The captain starts out in debt to Yerkys ne Dago, the notorious Twi'lek loan shark, who is not happy that the captain has missed a payment

date already. Hence, the start of the adventure...

A BEAST OF A TRIP

The player characters have just returned to Travnin from a trip to Yelsain, where, at the bidding of Yerkys, they have picked up a rare wildebeest that Yerkys had somehow "requisitioned" for himself. To make up for the late payment, the captain must deliver the wildebeest alive and unharmed to Yerkys on Travnin. A big complication is that the beast needs to be transported unfrozen and has to be fed.

As the ship enters real space in the Travnin System, during the dangerous daily feeding time, the beast gets



ALIEN
NEWS
'92'

loose—and escapes into the engine spaces! Firing blasters into the engine is not a good idea, so stun settings and other methods of nondestructive capture must be used by the PCs before the beast disassembles the hyperdrive in search of a tasty snack—the chief engineer! The beast is 1.5 meters tall, about as wide as it is high, and has 7D in Strength, 2D in Dexterity. The beast will cause at least one system to be damaged per round that it remains free.

After the beast has been subdued and damage control has been performed on PCs and ship alike, the engineer will find a piece of very bad news lying shattered on the deck—the Thelman Converter. Without one, the ship cannot jump, and no spares are available. The replacement cost is about Cr3000. Coincidentally, this is exactly the same amount as the payment due tonight to Yerkys, and it is also the amount of profit on the cargo currently in the cargo hold bound for Travnin. Decisions, decisions.

GRAND DESIGN

After landing and clearing customs, then off-loading and collecting payment for their cargo, the PCs receive a communication from Yerkys—payment and transfer of the beast will take place at the PCs' docking bay at 2400 local time, just six hours from now. The crew has that long to come up with an idea and/or Cr3000 more. A friendly portworker will mention to the PCs, if they make inquiries about getting replacement parts on the cheap, that the Grand Design Bar is a good place to pick up spare parts at a deep discount, if you know what she means.

The Grand Design (described on page 57 of the *Tramp Freighters* book) is a unique bar. It could be said that much of the independent trade of the Minos Cluster, ahem, revolves around its funhouse confines. The bar is basically a cylinder three levels tall, with the elements of each level floating about the central axis cylinder, which is a transparent tube. There are three continuous shows in progress at any one time, each of them on a stand in the central tube. A bar surrounds each level of the tube, with floating repulsorlift dance floors large enough for a platoon circulating around the bar. One gets one's drinks on the fly, literally. The outer ring has a spiral stair with terraced booths, leading upward. Level three is the premium level, with an opaque floor and bouncer-guarded doors. There is a Cr100 charge to enter level three. Also, upon entry to level three, all obvious weapons are checked at the door, with a detector and security guards to enforce the restriction. There are no exceptions to the rule.

The PCs will probably want to leave at least one member behind to guard the beast. All the others, upon entering the Grand

Design, should make a Moderate Stamina check to endure the sensory disorientation of the internal dance of the planets. A Difficult Perception check will show them where to sit and survive best while enjoying themselves. If the PCs discreetly make enquiries about starship parts, allow them to hear a number of rumors before a Difficult Streetwise check allows them to make contact with Neena, the singer currently performing on level one (she is described on page 71 of *Tramp Freighters*). Neena will come to speak with the PCs at about 2000 hours, after she finishes her first set.

Neena asks if the crew has heard of Nadir Corporation. Nadir, it seems, is a broadly based electronics and robotics corporation here on Travnin, with a small, wholly automated starship yard at Travnin Spaceport. A unique feature of Nadir is that it is controlled by droids! Organic beings are limited to sales and design work for its most profitable product line: personal holo gear. A new and radically improved model of holocorder is about to be introduced, and if the PCs are interested, Neena says, "Some of my friends would like a preview of the great new box. If you guys could, like, visit Nadir and get one of these new boxes, you could get your whatever it is for your ship and some cash too. How about it?"

NADIR

Neena's friends on the inside of Nadir have obtained a copy of the security droid patrol schedule, some security override codes of the warehouse where the new holocorders are being stored and a plan of the Nadir plant. Getting in and out of the nearest gate to the warehouse will be relatively simple, as automated repulsorlift trucks continually enter and exit the plant. There is a weapon detector at the gate. Getting aboard one of the trucks is a Moderate Climbing/Jumping check, and concealing oneself is an Easy Hide/Sneak check.

Warehouse 59, where the holocorder boxes are located, is about 50 meters on a side and three meters high. The new units are prototypes—full-scale production is a month or two off. Entry into the warehouse is an Easy Security check with access codes. Finding the holocorders is no problem, as they come in crates containing units of 100, each crate a half meter on a side and massing 250 kilograms. But the crates have a security seal on them—with an electronic alarm! Disarming the alarm is a Difficult Security Check. If the PCs fail to disarm the alarm, the alarm will sound everywhere across the plant, the gates will be closed, and the dance of the security droids will begin. If the PCs succeed, they are now free to begin the search for their new Thelman Converter. Moving a holocorder crate is no problem, as a 10-meter-square repulsorlift

cargo platform is here in the warehouse, capable of moving up to one kiloton of cargo. The crew now has transport within the plant area.

The PCs must now cross the main production facility area to get to the shipyard on the other side of the plant. The interior of the plant is wholly automated, with raw materials flowing in, and finished products and waste flowing out. The noise is incredible—so incredible that the crew does not notice the security droid that they literally bump into. A Moderate Perception check will inform the PCs that they are under stunner fire! Eight security droids (use the Probe Droid stats, page 55 of the *Star Wars Sourcebook*), equipped with stun pistols (so as not to destroy the valuable production line), will engage the PCs. Another squad of eight will arrive in three turns. There is a computer console nearby—a Very Difficult Droid Programming/Repair roll will shut down the security droids for 1D6+2 turns. A Difficult Computer Programming/Repair roll will reveal the location the starship part storage bay—with the Thelman Converters' locations!

It will require four turns to get to the shipyard storage bays, which are locked. A Difficult Security check will open the doors. A vast storage area will be revealed, with several thousand different variants of Thelman Converters!

By this time, even more security droids are on the way. Making a Moderate Perception check will allow the PC to see a container with stock numbers looking remarkably close to the unit specifications of your ship in a nearby shelf. On making an Easy Starship Repair check, the engineer will say, "Close enough. Parts is parts," grab the 10-kilo unit and run.

The gates are now closed, of course. But a repulsorlift truck is handy—an Easy Droid Programming/Repair roll will allow the PCs to drive it straight off the site, if they go through the fence. The cargo platform will be a tight squeeze aboard the truck. The pursuing security droids will stop at the perimeter line, allowing a presumably jubilant crew to escape.

PAYBACKS ARE A BEAST

After ditching the truck, the PCs should return to the Grand Design. Neena will meet them in the service dock of the bar with their payment. If the PCs hand over a full crate of holocorders, Neena will be delighted beyond description, kissing the most embarrassing of the PCs and dancing about with joy. She will have an old cargodroid, LREED, haul off the crate, and will pay the captain Cr4000. If the PCs return a partial crate, no histrionics will ensue, but Neena will be pleased and pay Cr3000. PCs being PCs, they will probably keep at least one of

the holocorders each for themselves. If only one holocorder, or fragments of one, are returned, Neena will pay Cr500 and will probably not deal with the PCs again.

In any case, by the time the payment is made, a PC's watch will beep 2300 hours. At this time, Neena, if she is at all pleased with the crew, will say, "You guys aren't too bad. Have you decided where to go next in your ship? I've got a delivery to make to a friend on Adarlon, and he'd pay you well." If the crew agrees, Neena will give a holocrystal and a business card to captain, asking him to deliver the holo to man on the card at Pwosson Pictures on Adarlon. "Thanks. Look me up when you're back here on Travnin again. I might have some more business for you."

The PCs have made a contact with the black market.

IT'S NOT OVER

As the kitchen door closes behind Neena, the PCs will hear the approaching hum of repulsors and see three assassin droids! "Return the stolen unit!" they blare, even as they open fire with riot gun stunners. These are Nadir bots, so reduce each skill code on these droids by 1D.

Dumpsters full of trash sit next to the dock. An Average Dodge roll will allow the PCs to jump right in and avoid being stunned. There are also pressurized beverage containers out on the dock. The make dandy prismatic aerosols.

If the PCs prevail, several questions are going to be on their minds besides the laundry bills—how were they followed, how can they lose Nadir, and can they make it back to the ship in time to pay off Yerkys? On a Difficult Security check, it can be determined that one of the holocorders they have is emitting a homing beacon!

Getting back to the ship in time remaining is a Moderate Repulsorlift Operation roll if the PCs rent a speeder. The other problems could be solved if someone would like to feed the beast something very special—a Very Difficult Dexterity check will be required to feed the beast the homing holocorder without losing a limb, and a Difficult Alien Races roll will be required to keep it down. In the meantime, the engineer can install the new Thelman Converter with a Very Difficult Starship Repair roll. This unit seems to be an advanced model, with an integral computer processor to enhance hyperdrive performance, perhaps even bringing the stock freighter's hyperdrive multiplier down to a 1! Wow!

Before the PCs can get too excited, the loan shark appears: "My dear captain. I hope your trip was a pleasant one, both for you and my pet. Are you ready to bring him out now? Good. And your payment? Excellent. Don't forget—same time next month! Clear skies and profit to you, captain!"

The loan shark will board his luxury skimmer and depart, followed by the sounds of humming droid repulsors, which pause for a

moment at the docking bay door, then follow the skimmer.

Time to leave.

JUMPING TO ILLUSIONS

After clearing Travnin orbit, the PCs may jump to Adarlon, a trip of some 30 hours for the ship—normally. But when the hyperdrive is engaged, a massive rending sound is heard from the hyperdrive, and the ship drops back immediately into realspace, alarms sounding hysterically from the engineer's panel. The engineer remarks, "Now I remember where I heard the word 'Nadir' before: 'The malfunction goes in before the name goes on!'"

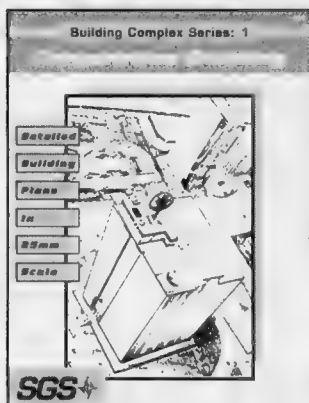
Unseen to all, a small red light is blinking on the Thelman Converter. And far behind on Travnin, a small ship takes off from the Nadir Corporation yard.

CONCLUSION

The PCs have made a connection with the underground holo market, and also through Neena, to the Rebellion. It is probable that they have made enemies of the Nadir Corporation and Yerkys ne Dago. Complications will ensue next time they all meet with the PCs. Anyone for fake IDs?

Adventure Experience Rewards: For making it, 4 points. For coming up with the idea to stick Yerkys with the homer, 2 points each. For impressing Neena by delivering a whole crate, 1 point each. Ω

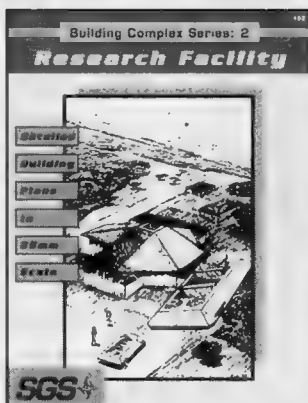
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Winter Fantasy Convention, Jan. 8-10. For information, contact Winter Fantasy, RPGA Network, PO Box 515, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Arisia '93, Jan. 15-17 at the Boston Park Plaza Hotel and Towers.

Winter Gamefest '93, Jan. 22-24 at the South Towne Mall Community Center in Sandy, UT. Contact IGC, PO Box 512, Roy, UT 84067-0512.

Warpcon III, Jan. 28-31 at the University College Cork, Ireland.

Warcon® '93, Feb. 5-7 in the Memorial Student Center, Texas A&M University, College Station, TX. Please contact MSC NOVA, Box J1, Memorial Student Center, Texas A&M, College Station, TX 77844.

Life, the Universe and Everything XI, Feb. 10-13 at Brigham Young University, Provo, UT. Contact 1993 Symposium, 3163 JKHB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

Genghis Con XIV, Feb. 12-14 at the Marriott Southeast in Denver, CO. Contact the Denver Gamers Association, PO Box 440058, Aurora, CO 80044.

Orccon 16, Feb. 12-15 at the LA Airport Hyatt Hotel. Contact Strategicon, PO Box 3849, Torrance, CA 90510-3849.

DunDraCon XVII, Feb. 12-15 at the San Ramon Marriott, just off I-680, at the Bollinger Canyon exit, three miles north of the I-580/I-680 interchange. Please contact DunDraCon, 1125 Nielson St., Albany, CA 94706.

SheVaCon '93, Feb. 19-21 at the Ingleside Resort Hotel, Verona, VA. Contact SheVaCon, c/o Dave Davies, 300 Harrison St., Lynchburg, VA 24504.

HurriCon, Feb. 26-28 at the Holiday Inn, Fort Walton Beach, FL. Contact Steven Earl Yoder, c/o Bards Tales Book Shoppe, 109 D Racetrack Road, Fort Walton Beach, FL 32547.

Jaxcon '93, Feb. 26-28 at the Radisson Inn at the Jacksonville International Airport in Jacksonville, FL. Please write to Jaxcon, PO Box 4423, Jacksonville, FL 32201.

Total Convulsion VII, Feb. 26-28 at the Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel, 181 Boston Post Road, Marlborough, MA 01752. Contact The Total Convulsion Convention, PO Box 1463, Worcester, MA 01607.

Continuity II, Feb. 27-28 in Donahue Hall, Wheeling Jesuit College, Wheeling, WV. Contact Bryan M. Sims, Box 144MC, 316 Washington Ave., Wheeling, WV 26003.

World Horror Convention No. 3, March 4-7 at the Sheraton Stamford Hotel in Stamford, CT.

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ConnCon '93, March 26-28 at the Danbury Hilton and Towers in Danbury, CT. Contact ConnCon, PO Box 444, Sherman, CT 06784-0444.

Magnum Opus Con-8, April 1-4 at the Hyatt Regency in Greenville, SC. Write to MOC-8, PO Box 6585, Athens, GA 30604.

Coastcon XVI, April 2-4 at the Holiday Inn Express (next to the Holiday Inn Beachfront). Contact

Coastcon XVI, PO Box 1423, Biloxi, MS 39533-1423.

Pointcon XVI, April 23-25 at the United States Military Academy in West Point, NY. Contact USMA Wargames Committee, Attn: Pointcon XVI, PO Box 62, West Point, NY 10997.

Gamex '93, May 28-31 at the LA Airport Hyatt Hotel. For more information, contact Strategicon, PO Box 3849, Torrance, CA 90510-3849.

D-Cubed 1993, June 5-6 at the Pensacola Civic Center, Pensacola, FL. Please contact AGI, Inc., PO Box 37186, Pensacola, FL 32526-0186.

Origins '93, July 1-4 at the Tarrant County Convention Center in Ft. Worth, TX. Write to GEMCO, PO Box 609, Randallstown, MD 21133.

CowCon, July 2-5 at Sheraton Denver Tech Center, CO. Write to CowCon/Westercon 46 Bid, 7735 Osceola St., Westminster, CO 80030.

Archon 17, July 9-11 in St. Louis, MO. Contact Archon 17, PO Box 50125, Clayton, MO 63105.

GenCon '93, Aug. 19-22 in Milwaukee, WI. Send a SASE to 1993 GenCon Game Fair, PO Box 756, Lake Geneva, WI 53147.

Gateway '93, Sept. 3-6 at the LA Airport Hyatt Hotel. Contact Strategicon, PO Box 3849, Torrance, CA 90510-3849.

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Kept^omania

By Andy Slack

A mission of some delicacy
awaits the PCs on Efrat Station



The PCs are part of a detachment of Van Owen's Rangers currently on Efrat Station. They may be on garrison duty there, or may be taking a few days of R&R after escorting cargo or passengers from another station. The referee may make any necessary changes to suit his PCs' situation if they are not members of the Rangers.

MISSION BRIEFING

While off-duty on Efrat Station (*High Colonies*, page 26), the PCs are approached by a wealthy trader, James Alden, who has a commission of some delicacy that he wishes them to undertake for him.

Alden explains that his wife, Claire, suffers from compulsive shoplifting. Since the penalty for petty theft on Efrat Station is the loss of a hand, this could be unfortunate. Business calls him away from the station for a few days, and during this time, he would like the party to follow his wife around and cover up her shoplifting. He has found that the most effective way of doing this is by bribing the offended shopkeepers and any local police who become involved.

He will, of course, repay the PCs for any expenses incurred during the commission. In addition, he will pay each party member EC 500—not a bad wage for a few days of idling around town.

MAP

The referee should prepare a map of a shopping mall for the scenario. It's also feasible to run the scenario without a map, by simply describing a shopping area you know well as you go along.

REFEREEING THE SCENARIO

Since the PCs, the merchant and his wife are all expatriates, it is natural for them to meet at some suitable cafe (alcohol is forbidden on Efrat Station, so there are no bars) or government building. Once they have been introduced, it is equally natural for the PCs—as fellow ex-pats—to offer to escort Claire during her husband's absence, thus allaying her suspicions.

Being off-duty as they are, the player characters are theoretically unarmed and clad only in light cloth fatigues. However, heavy cloth or leather can be worn without attracting attention, and knives or light pistols can be easily concealed. Clubs and other improvised melee weapons abound in the mall—

butcher's cleavers, for instance.

Alden will be absent for four days. During his absence, Claire will go shopping daily for several hours, buying fresh fruit and vegetables, imported delicacies, souvenirs and so on. Two or three times each day, she will attempt to steal something. Claire is not good at petty theft, and her attempts will invariably be noticed. Usually, Alden's plan of bribery will work, although the first few encounters should be roleplayed in detail—enjoy yourself insulting the PCs and haggling for the cash. Each bribe will be 1D6×EC 50; modify the die roll by -1 if the PCs make a successful roll against an appropriate skill such as Con-Artist and -2 for a special success. If the police become involved, there are at least two of them, and each must be bribed.

Each day, the referee should implement one of the following special encounters during a shopping expedition.

Honorable Merchant: The PCs discover a shopkeeper who cannot be bribed to keep quiet, but insists on calling in the authorities. The merchant (a generic trader) is ignorant of off-station customs, so if the PCs come up with a good excuse and a successful Con-Artist roll, he can be mollified; otherwise, nothing short of a knife in the ribs will shut him up. If he does turn Claire in, the PCs will be arrested as accomplices and sentenced to the same fate. A quick jailbreak is in order at this point, before all concerned lose a hand. Murdering a merchant for reporting a theft is, of course, a serious offense—a full-scale investigation will be launched immediately, and the PCs can expect swift and harsh justice if they are caught.

Mistaken Identity: Local police have heard rumors that Claire will be kidnapped and/or murdered by persons unknown, and officers are discreetly following her. Knowing that the PCs are off-station mercenaries, they have decided that the PCs are the ones who will conduct the attack, and the police will try to arrest them. The PCs must talk their way out, as assaulting the law enforcers is a one-way ticket to 20 years on a penal station. If the party selects the latter option, the police are generic soldiers from page 58 of *High Colonies*, equipped with metal vests over light cloth, acrylic helmets, short range communicators and assault rifles.

Terrorists: Local fanatics have decided to slaughter Claire and any other foreigners they can find in the mall that day, to draw attention to their cause and embarrass the local government. The PCs must subdue these ruffians with

minimal loss of innocent life and property. The terrorists are generic soldiers, in light cloth and armed with a variety of pistols and melee weapons. The station's security forces have been bribed by the terrorists and are conspicuous by their absence. Dealing with their attackers could be worth a month's hazardous duty pay and a commendation for the PCs.

Kidnappers: Unscrupulous rivals of Alden attempt to kidnap Claire, in the mistaken belief that this will distract him during the current negotiations. Four thugs are involved, armed with gas grenades, knives and flechette pistols; they also have gas masks and heavy cloth armor. Should the kidnappers succeed, the Rangers will order the PCs to track them down and rescue Claire to restore the honor of the regiment.

NPCS

James Alden: The merchant is a generic trader from page 58 of *High Colonies*. He married Claire for the extra capital and influence she provided him, and he cares for her only as a symbol of his status and wealth.

Claire Alden: The merchant's wife is a bored and lonely woman who resents her husband's frequent absences and has taken to petty theft to attract his attention. She may attempt to begin an affair with a suitably handsome and dashing PC. Treat her as a generic trader from page 58 of *High Colonies*. Her family is well-off, with a moderate amount of influence in the Outstation League.

ALTERNATIVES AND VARIANTS

For a really confused and complex combat, implement all four suggested encounters in quick succession in the above order, starting one while the PCs are still dealing with another.

Fast Combat Rules: The combat system for *High Colonies* is relatively complex, and it may be worth simplifying if you want to speed up the fights and get on with the roleplaying. To do this, ignore hit location rolls and deduct damage straight from total IPS. Use the minimum values for armor rather than rolling armor dice. If characters are wearing different types of armor on different hit locations, assume all hits strike the chest, which is the most likely target zone. Armored characters often have enough layered armor that the average dice rolls are below the total minimums, so this will not distort matters too much. Ω

A CHILL adventure by Greg Unger OPERATION:

HELLS

The PCs find themselves playing with fire when they participate in some unusual experiments.



The character group has been conducting experiments in metaphysics in a warehouse leased and converted into a laboratory setup. These experiments involve ancient rites and quasi-alchemical formulas, combined with modern scientific process and theory. The PCs in this adventure should be a combination of parapsychologists, preternaturalists and university students majoring in subjects like occult, metaphysics and computer science. They'll need some connection with a local university, and a journalism background or connections with the police will help. Two NPCs should also be a part of the group. The films *Prince of Darkness* and *Altered States* characterize this scenario's protagonists very well.

This adventure is written for *Chill*, but can just as easily be used for either *Dark Conspiracy* or *Call of Cthulhu* (modern period).

INTO THE FIRE

Effectively what is being dealt with in the metaphysical experiments is hypergeometric principles (familiar to *Cthulhu* players) applied using modern technology. The PCs are assumed to have recorded and personally memorized the proper incantations for transdimensional travel, and they are currently preparing an experiment to project one of their number to the "other side."

Obviously, the process has already been tested using lab animals, but the results are up to the GM—either the animals were unable to be projected (assume they do not possess the psychic energy required), or

actually crossed dimensions and returned without apparent harm.

The process will only work at night, due to the interference of solar radiation during the daytime. The subject must strip down and be painted with symbols, done in blood, then placed in a sensory deprivation tank to calm him and prepare his psyche for the task (being civilized and humane, the PCs are assumed to be using blood plasma from the university freezer). A weird combination of mathematical symbols and ancient runes are then etched in pigments on the floor around the tank, and candles (or Bunsen burners) are placed in key points on the runes. Some chanting is performed, along with a recitation of the incantation's hypergeometric formula by the decided chant leader. All of this is augmented technologically using computer simulations and biofunctions monitors on the subject.

At a high point in the incantations, the computer begins printing readouts indicating that energy is radiating from the SD tank, rather than vice versa. Following this, the water in the SD tank begins to boil, all lights near the tank extinguish, and the subject is enveloped in an intense light and vanishes from the tank. When the computer comes on after this power failure, it begins a continuous printout of bioreadout displays, and its screen flashes "Transference Successful" over and over. Anyone bothering to check on the bioreadouts finds that they are going off the scale, before the transdimensional connections are lost and the readouts discontinue. Anyone checking the SD tank will find that the bioreadout sensors attached to the subject apparently went with him, leaving

the severed and sparking wires floating in the tank.

An unexpected surge in psychic energy will result in the accidental transference of a second person, probably the first to touch the SD tank. The computer will immediately begin flashing "Second Transference Successful."

RESULTS

The second person sent might be brought back first before the first person can be retrieved. This will involve a hasty repeat of the ritual, whereupon the second person (who probably spent about 10 to 30 seconds there, depending on the PCs' reaction time) will return, stunned and delirious. This subject recovers quickly, whole of mind, and it can be theorized that he was incapacitated by the unexpected energy release and inadequate preparations of the second transfer. The second subject remembers little other than vague and dreamy impressions of wood steam and yellow light mixed with shadow.

The first person sent through (who probably spent five to 10 minutes there) will be utterly insane when retrieved and covered in dark (human) blood. This subject will be subsequently placed in a mental hospital. A PC can be treated less severely, but a drop in Willpower or Sanity (depending on the game used) is appropriate. Regardless, the subject will be unable to talk about his experience, either continually professing ignorance or else going into hysterics at the mention of the experiment.

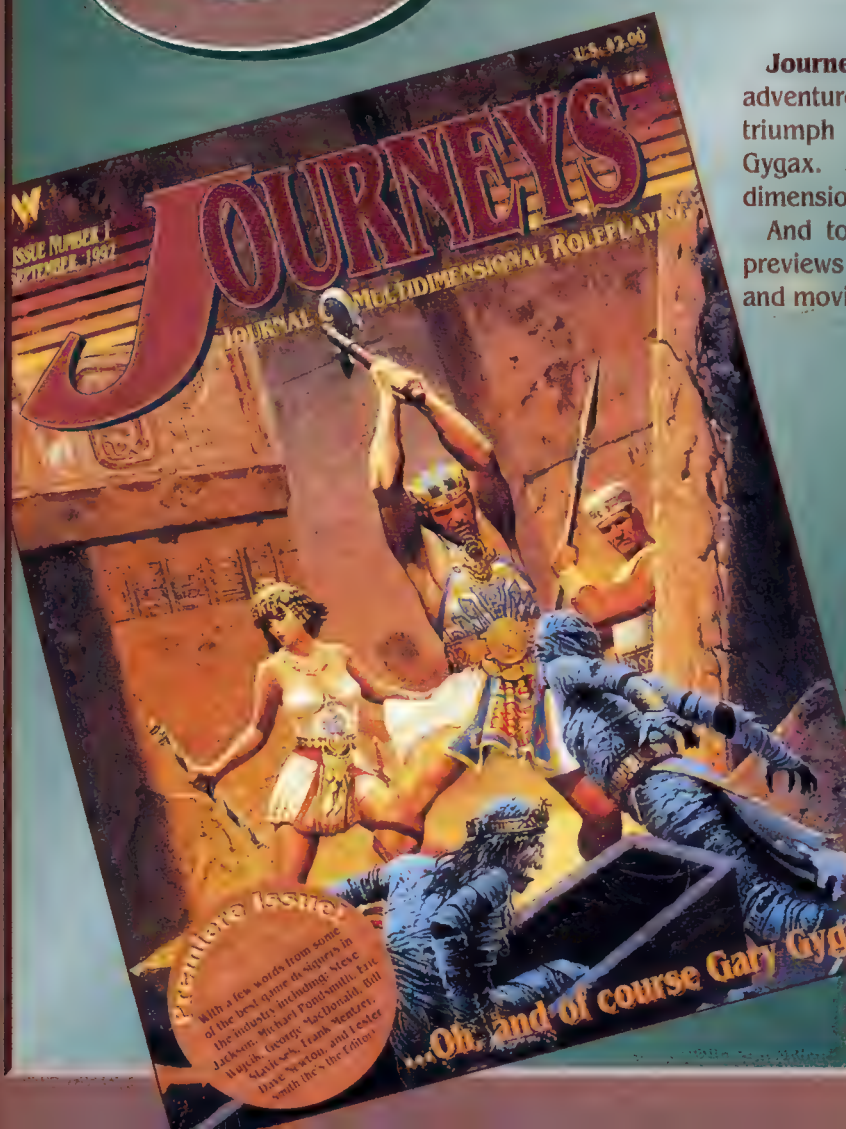
The remaining characters should be reluctant to continue experimenting. This, combined with threats of a lawsuit (from the

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subject's family) and a loss of funding, should shut the entire project down. All of this will have shaken the integrity of the group, so any NPCs will decide to pursue other independent interests for a while.

Nothing out of the ordinary happens over the next few weeks. But eventually, the PCs begin to notice a variety of strange occurrences within their town. They probably won't relate this to their experiment. Yet.

DEATHS

Soon after the experiment, the local media begins reporting unrelated incidences of mysterious deaths in the area. The PCs will learn of these events one at a time. Newspapers, taking their information from the coroner's report, will begin printing euphemistic descriptions for the more unexplainable deaths. The more unsettling truth can be discovered by the PCs, perhaps by viewing the scenes of death (if they have enough clout to get past the police lines).

The first death is of a middle-aged man found in his bathtub. His body is badly burned and dissolved, as if from concentrated acid, and the bathtub has holes melted into it. The stench is unbearable. Anyone bothering to check the showerhead will notice that the water aperture is burned and melted. The coroner simply lists the cause of death as "severe burns." Research into his occupation reveals that the man worked for two months in a chemical plant several years ago.

The second death is of an old blind man who lived alone on the outskirts of town. He was found wearing his bathrobe and slippers at the bottom of his house's staircase, a victim of an apparent fall. The stairs, however, were splattered with blood, and the old man's body was gashed to ribbons with what appeared to be deep razor cuts. These could not possibly be self-inflicted, and besides that, the old man owns an electric razor, not a straight razor.

PACKAGE

One of the PCs will eventually notice that a large package has been left by the door of his next-door neighbor's house. The package will stay there for days, and the PCs should get suspicious that no one has come out to claim it. If they go to check on the neighbor, they realize they can't remember anyone ever living in the house. The package is addressed to Professor H. Kimmons, at the address of the house, with no return address. With a bit of research, the PCs will find that, indeed, no one lives in the house. No Kimmons has ever lived in the house, nor has anyone heard of him.

The package contains a number of notes, journals and logs, which the PCs realize with surprise pertain to their experiment! The material also contains a letter to Kimmons

Transference Ritual

The ritual is 10-15 minutes long. It consists of incantations, group chant and meditation on the part of the subject. Materials needed include an SD tank, computer equipment, one liter of blood, chalk, pigments, candles or equivalent. Preparation are described in the Into the Fire section.

The ritual transfers subject from Earth to Acheron. The spell may be reversed, returning subject to Earth from Acheron. This must be done immediately, or else the subject loses contact with the plane of transferal and must be brought back to a plane familiar to him. If a subject is brought back without adequate preparation, he (not the caster) suffers fatigue to the extent of 2D10 Stamina Loss+Confusion. If he is in a place of power (such as the vaulted stone chamber in Acheron), a caster may transfer himself without a lengthy ritual or preparation, but this fatigues the caster to the extent of 4D10 Stamina loss and 1D5 wounds (or -1D3 hit points in *Call of Cthulhu*). A group of casters may act as casters for each other.

In *Chill*, a casting check modifier of -5 is applied to either the caster's Ritual Magic skill or his best score in the Art. A Computer or Mathematics skill roll is required to be rolled during the ritual.

In *Call of Cthulhu*, a Computer Use roll is required, rolled during the ritual, as well as a POW roll on 1D20 on the part of the caster.

from Lucas Tabor, an NPC involved in the experiment who is currently on vacation. This letter makes references to the professor supposedly working at the university and indicates that this material is for his benefit. The letter also says that the project is strapped for funding (true) and intones that a small loan on the part of the professor would be greatly appreciated and reciprocated.

Anyone making an Idea roll or its equivalent realizes that they, too, have at times had notes and items in their possession (e.g., Christmas cards, etc.) that were related inexplicably to this Kimmons fellow. Vague sensations of recognition kick in, but these are not vivid enough to be called memories.

By luck or intuition, one PC will turn up an old first-year psychology assignment on fear a few days or weeks later, which includes a survey of several dozen people as to their greatest fears. Coincidentally, there is a Professor Harvey Kimmons listed on one of the survey sheets. In a crabbed and splotchy handwriting, his greatest fear is listed:

"To my mind, the absolute pinnacle of horror would be an utter loss of self, of identity, and thus, of soul. What worth is there in living if one is not remembered after death? If I were to die tomorrow and be utterly forgotten to one and all—this concept is far more terrifying to me than anything a more graphic mind could construct."

DISAPPEARANCES

Anyone inquiring about Tabor, the NPC who sent the package to Kimmons, will find that he has taken a vacation in Colorado after the experiment's fiasco. Research will find that he is long overdue in returning. Any attempts to contact him fail, but the PCs will be given the address of J. Borgges, a friend of Tabor's. No phone number is given, and

any PCs going to visit Borgges will find that he lives in an isolated log cabin that lacks a telephone line. Borgges used to run a vacation and sporting lodge in Colorado before he sold it and moved to his cabin in a secluded valley. He apparently became friends with Tabor, who often came to his lodge. Tabor told Borgges that he was going to go parachuting in the valley, despite Borgges' cautions to the contrary:

"Told him there was a snowstorm brewin', but he figured he knew the sky well enough and went off anyway, even though it was nearing twilight. Said he'd meet me in the valley and then come up for some hot cocoa. He had a real glint in his eye, like he knew he was riskin' it, but he was more thrilled than scared. I never saw him again. It started snowin' and got late, so I went lookin' for him. I found his parachute tangled in a tree."

The parachute wasn't ripped and wasn't unbuckled. From his knowledge of parachuting, Borgges knows it is impossible to slip off a functioning parachute harness, even if you tried. You would have to personally unbuckle it first. And an empty, open parachute thrown out of a plane would just catch the wind and ride out into the Rockies without the weight of a man on it.

Some of the PCs who knew Tabor can attest to his usual calm demeanor, with occasional wild streaks, as if he had to release tension through spontaneity. This would make him a perfect candidate for skydiving, but he never mentioned the hobby.

Recent back issues of the local newspaper contain an article concerning the unexplained disappearance of Tabor, which was eventually listed, much to Borgges' objection, as a parachuting accident.

Due to state regulations, Tabor's belongings are being held by police for a set amount of time before they will be sent to the family.

Friends or relations will be allowed to look at the belongings, but only next of kin can claim them. Among the personal effects and clothes found in Tabor's lodge room are a couple of papers which Tabor apparently copied some of the experimental incantations on. A notebook contains a few new incantations, formulas pertaining to altitude energy dispersion and temperature, and some notes on the effects of adrenalin on psychic potential.

REVELATION

What has been happening is as follows: The experiment took both subjects beyond our universe to "Acheron," which corresponds somewhat to the biblical version of Hell. The second transference interrupted a delicate ritual, however, and strained the barrier between the two dimensions, allowing part of the "other side" to begin seeping into our world. *This is causing the materialization of people's nightmares or worst fears.*

After the experiment, Tabor told everyone he was going to take a vacation. While there, he decided to try out his own theory about transdimensional travel, and he accidentally plunged himself into Acheron while parachuting.

The PCs may be able to form some horrible speculations: Five minutes on the "other side" left one person screaming in the asylum. This guy's been there for over a month!

KIDNAPPED

Soon after their horrible realization, suspicious things begin happening. PCs may notice that their possessions look slightly out of place, as if someone has been in their homes. Paranoid PCs who think to check will find that their phones are bugged. They may begin to notice that they are being shadowed by black sedans. The suspense will build to the point of the PCs finding that their laboratory has been broken into and searched, with some of their notes stolen. A teacher or friend they confide in about this strangeness may be shot to death or strangled, or could disappear. The police will be unsympathetic, decrying no evidence to warrant prosecution.

In reality, the PCs are being tailed by a quasi-legal organization run by the government, which has orders to "apprehend" (i.e., kidnap) the PCs. Agents have been instructed to take the PCs alive, but will not hesitate to shoot to disable if threatened.

Eventually, the PCs notice, individually or when in a group, that they are being followed by several men in suits. Soon, a black sedan shows up, and a chase may follow. These agents will pull guns, and, unless the PCs pull off something really spectacular, they will be captured, blindfolded and hustled into a car. PCs who escape will become semi-fugitives, and begin receiving phone calls

from a friendly voice who offers them asylum and tells them this has to do with their "experiment." PCs taking this route will be able to come forward and go with the agents without being blindfolded.

PCs who are captured or accept asylum are taken a fair distance to an isolated military base, where they are escorted to a deep subterranean level and pass through several security gates. Then they meet with General Cassimont in a small interrogation room. He apologizes for any inconveniences and offers amenities such as tea, the use of the washroom, etc. Cassimont tells the PCs that the government has learned of the experimentation, as well as the strange occurrences and the disappearance of their NPC friend. He offers the PCs a chance to get their friend back. He then takes them to a high-tech lab complex further in the building.

GATE

The PCs are taken to a room filled with computers and monitoring equipment. Computer screens display images on various light spectrums. There are a few scientific personnel in radiation suits operating the equipment, and two guards with rifles standing nearby. One wall of the room contains a large viewscreen, depicting a room filled with both functioning and damaged computers. Tangled wire and cables web the floor of this room, with most leading up to a large metal door or bulkhead on the far side of the room. A forest of testing and recording equipment has been set up inside this room.

"The door you see over there," Cassimont begins, pointing to the other room, "is a gate of some sort. We don't know where it leads, but we do know that it is broadcasting some very interesting types of energy. It was created by accident roughly a month ago, and we don't know why or how. Apparently, it's feeding off of our power supply somehow, and perhaps that is why it's staying open. Some early tests proved that if we were to cut the power, this thing would close and stay closed. But right now, that's not what worries us. You have been called here because of the experiments you conducted a while back. Wherever were you trying to go, we believe that this is a direct portal to that place."

The gate appears to be emanating a high-level gamma radiation that has previously only been associated with black holes. The radiation suits worn by the technicians are only a precaution, even though the room with the gate is in fact behind the wall with the viewscreen. An airlock leads from this room to the gate room. The general believes that this installation has accidentally accomplished using pure technology what the PCs have been attempting using both high-tech and so-called "magic," which the general believes is actually a kind of super-science.

So far, a military surveillance robot and two specially trained military personnel have been sent through, but to date none have returned, and the general does not want to risk any more of his people. All lost contact upon going through the gate. The PCs, with their experience in this field, are called upon to venture through the gate. This will also give them a chance to rescue their NPC friend, as well as inform the government of the situation. If the PCs ask, the general tells them that they have no choice—they know too much to be released right now. Those who refuse the offer will be given a cell to wait in until they decide to accept.

PREPARATION

The PCs are outfitted in what the technicians term transdimensional gear (TDG). These are ultra-tech antiradiation/pressure suits, with shoulder-mounted video cameras, wide-spectrum visuals (including IR and UV and light enhancement, thus allowing the PCs to see in the dark), internalized air and water recyclers, and multiband communications, including a theoretical particle beam transmission system that may allow the PCs to communicate with the base once they step through. All of the suits are heat and cold resistant, puncture and bullet resistant, and self-sealing if they are punctured. The helmets on the suits have no face plate—due to the immense radiation, a fully sealed suit was required, so all visual input is via video cameras. The PCs will be linked together by strong communication cables, in climbing fashion, with the last person linked to this side of the gate.

If possible, the PCs are to take samples of their environment, via sample collectors on the arm of their suits. They are advised not to stay too long—just get a look around and come back. If the PCs ask, Cassimont will say that the last person sent through was armed.

If pressed, the general will give the lead PC his sidearm.

BEYOND THE GATE

Once suited up, the PCs go through the airlock into the gate room. There they have their umbilicals attached by a technician in a rad-suit, who then leaves. The gate is slowly opened automatically, and their visuals switch to light reduction to compensate for the intense yellow light pouring from the portal. The monitors are recording extreme levels of radiation. Anyone stepping through the portal loses contact with the base within 15 seconds, umbilical or not. If the PCs all go through fairly rapidly, this will not be noticed until the last one has stepped through. If someone hesitates, they may realize that those before them have already lost contact, and refuse to go through.

ACHERON

Acheron is a strange place. Upon stepping through the gate, a person will walk through an area of intense heat, radiation and blinding light. Beyond this, the area is filled with steam or fog, and beads of moisture begin forming on the video cameras. Soon after entering, the atmosphere sets to work on the PCs' suits, rapidly dissolving synthetic materials, copper and silicon. This effectively causes their communications umbilical and even their pressure suits to literally slough off, leaving a few wires, metallic heating mesh, and insulation on the PCs' bodies. Hopefully, no one wore synthetic underclothes. Cassimont's pistol contained copper-jacketed cartridges, which disintegrate, so the pistol will almost surely misfire if used. Even worse, the entire magazine could ignite, potentially blowing the unfortunate PC's hand off. The air in Acheron is humid but breathable, and roughly the same pressure as sea-level.

The PCs are standing on a wet wooden floor, apparently a platform of some kind, suspended in a wide vertical shaft extending upward and, if anyone thinks to look at the platform's edge, downward. The place is lit by yellowish light from high above, as well as the portal behind the PCs. Exploration reveals that this place is composed of vaulting caverns and massive crumbling natural pillars. They are all interconnected with decrepit, steam-soaked and crumbling wooden bridges, with long, white, slimy tendons as thick as someone's arm interlacing the walkways and platforms, apparently reinforcing them. Damp vegetation decays on the wet, dark rocks, and steam slowly rises from the Stygian steps below. Many bridges are unsteady, and sway and creak ominously when walked upon. Some paths lead into intersections, and others lead into rock, forming an immense, maze-like structure in which it seems easy to get lost. But going back through the portal doesn't seem like such a good idea seeing as the pressure suits are gone.

MAZE

Those wandering away from the entrance platform may soon find themselves lost, and any stragglers will soon become separated from the main group. The PCs will then be trying to locate one another, only to become more confused by the strange acoustics in the steam and fog.

They may see each other on bridges separated by a vast chasm.

One PC will soon notice a large observation window (of glass?) set in the rock far away, backlit by yellow light. In the window is a figure, but the distance is too far to make out details. The figure soon leaves, which may give the PCs an incentive to try to locate the inhabitants of this place.

KEEPERS OF HELL

Eventually, the PCs will come across the inhabitants of Acheron. Several humanoids appear, wearing little clothing except black metallic plate-armor on their shoulders, chests and faces. They appear to have dark spots or scars in place of hair on their heads, and they are armed with some kind of strange spears or Nagiatas. They are proficient with their weapons and try to capture the PCs, but will try only to check violence, not aggravate it. The PCs are then taken to, or stumble across, a large vaulted stone chamber with carved walls and large, hypergeometric runes on the stone floor. Then the observers appear—tan-skinned, older-looking humanoids with horrible scars on their faces, wearing dark, almost Oriental robes. One of them will offer to talk with the PCs, whom he refers to as intruders. These people, called the Elders (no relation to the Elder Beings from *Call of Cthulhu*), are the ancient and true masters of Earth. They will soon be coming to reclaim it. Before any more is said, a bellowing groan is heard, and an armed Elder is dragged in by two similarly dressed Elder guards. The older one says, "Ah, yes, it is complete. You, my student, will lead us into our true dominion." With this, the old one steps forward and removes the Elder's face mask, revealing a face in which a nine-pointed star and other symbols have been literally cut into, with the skin within the scar stripped away and the points marked by pins or needles. Despite this, the face is still recognizable as Tabor!

ESCAPE FROM THE ABYSS

Tabor has been "converted" and is now an Elder envoy to Earth's universe. He has not lost all sympathy for his friends, however, and will allow them to leave if they wish. He is adamant that he has become an Elder of his own free will and has been through an "unimaginable experience." Talking with him will stall the older Elder, who is more inclined to have the PCs killed or used as biomass for the coming "birth" of the Elders onto Earth.

Anyone going back through the

gate will suffer burns and radiation sickness. A particularly sharp PC will recognize the significance of the runes in the vault and attempt a transference ritual to escape—this is only possible due to the tremendous power engraved in the room.

Destroying the gate will hamper the Elder invasion, and killing Tabor will seriously hinder the plan—achieving both will cripple the invasion, perhaps indefinitely. The Elders are mortal, but capable of surviving prodigious injuries by way of their advanced technology, so unless an Elder is actually killed in the presence of the PCs, he can be sure to live. Ω

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SCIENCE MARCHES ON

This article introduces new inventions for Space:1889.

Some are suitable for PC inventors to create, while others will probably be the products of evil mad scientist NPCs.

Referees may find some of these inventions to be useful points of departure for adventures.

By James L. Cambias

Devices are grouped by Research Area. The required minimum knowledge level and experimental success numbers are listed in parentheses after the name of each device.

TRANSPORTATION

Horseless Carriage: (2,1). Some of these can already be seen on the streets of London and Paris. A horseless carriage is simply an internal-combustion engine mounted on a chassis, with a transmission. Its speed in miles per hour is equal to twice its Reliability. Horseless carriages burn about one pound of petroleum for every mile travelled, and they have a 20-pound fuel supply. They have room for three passengers or 500 pounds of cargo, and require a crew of one. *Weight:* 2 tons. *Price:* £400.

Bathysphere: (15,2). A very sturdy steel sphere equipped with air tanks and thick windows, which is lowered into the deep ocean by cable. It can reach a depth in miles equal to its Reliability and can stay down for six hours. A bathysphere has room for four passengers. *Weight:* 10 tons. *Price:* £1000.

Motor-Bicycle: (18,2). A two-wheeled motorized vehicle, powered by a small internal-combustion engine. It requires a successful Routine: Agility task to learn how to ride one without falling over. They have a speed in miles per hour equal to twice their Reliability, and they consume a gallon of petroleum every 10 miles travelled. Motor-bicycles require one driver, and they can accommodate one passenger or 100 pounds of cargo. *Weight:* 200 pounds. *Price:* £250.

ELECTRICITY

Magnetic Levitation: (23,3). A method of suspending objects above a special magnetic track. This can be used to create wheel-less railways and similar fantastic vehicles. A magnetic levitation device can support a ton of cargo times its Reliability and can propel vehicles at a speed of 60 mph. *Weight:* 1 ton (in addition to the track, which weighs 10 tons per mile of length). *Price:* £500 per power level, plus £100 per mile of track. *Power:* 1 per ton of cargo.

BIOCHEMISTRY

Animal Repellent: (18,3). A strong-smelling liquid which, when applied to the skin, repels a given type of animal. In general, each sort of animal repellent affects a single class of living creatures (i.e., fish, reptiles, mammals, etc.). The duration of a dose in hours is equal to the Reliability. *Weight:* A dose sufficient to coat a person weighs four ounces. *Price:* £1 per dose.

Regeneration Drug: (23,3). This amazing substance quickly repairs damage to the body. Each dose restores a number of wounds equal to the Reliability number. The drug takes 15 minutes to take effect, during which time the patient must be resting quietly.

The healing is permanent. The drug must be injected into the subject's veins. *Weight:* 5 doses per ounce. *Price:* £15 per dose.

Growth Serum: (34,3). This strange chemical produces amazing temporary growth in organisms. A dose makes the user double in height and gain eight times the initial weight. It requires two days to take effect, during which time the subject has an amazing appetite. The effect lasts a number of days equal to the Reliability, at which point the subject returns to normal over a period of two days. At full size, the individual's Strength and Endurance are doubled, while Agility is halved. The effect of two doses doubles the being's size yet again, but further doses merely prolong the effect. If the serum is given to a growing infant, the growth will be permanent. Users must make a successful Reliability roll to avoid suffering 1D6 damage. *Weight:* 1 dose per ounce. *Price:* £10 per dose.

Pseudo-Death Drug: (36,4). This mysterious substance causes living things to sink into a deathlike state. There is no heartbeat, no respiration, and the victim's body temperature drops. The patient needs no food and is unconscious. Physicians may notice that there is no rigor mortis or other sign of decay. The trance lasts for a number of days equal to Reliability and takes effect instantly upon injection. Persons using the drug must roll equal to or below Reliability to revive successfully—otherwise, the pseudo-death becomes the genuine article. *Weight:* 8 doses per ounce. *Price:* £6 per dose.

De-Evolution Drug: (36,4). This fiendish compound can actually regress a living organism back along the path of its evolutionary development—each dose taken will lower an individual one level on following scale:

Level	Evolutionary Development
1	Protoplasm, one-celled creatures
2	Plants
3	Invertebrates (insects, mollusks, worms, etc.)
4	Reptiles and amphibians
5	Avians or mammals
6	Intelligent beings
7	Superhuman intelligences

The subject must roll less than the Reliability of the drug to avoid an unpleasant death. The drug may be injected or taken orally—it has a strong and unpleasant taste which is difficult to disguise. *Weight:* 10 doses per ounce. *Price:* £4 per dose.

Evolution Serum: (37,5). This fantastic potion has the amazing effect of advancing the user along the evolutionary scale. Each dose moves the creature one level higher on the scale shown above. For each dose taken, the subject must roll under the Reli-

ability of the serum or expire horribly. Creatures will retain some of their original features as they are transformed; a turtle raised to human level would still have a shell and recognizable turtle features. It is possible to raise a being beyond level 7, but the results are left to the referee to determine. The serum must be injected directly. *Weight:* 10 doses per ounce. *Price:* £5 per dose.

Universal Solvent: (39,5). The universal solvent is very dangerous, for it can dissolve through any substance, given enough time. This makes it extremely difficult to keep for extended periods, as it must be continually transferred to new containers. A pint of universal solvent applied to a surface will dissolve matter as if it were an explosive with a power equal to the Reliability of the solvent. *Weight:* 1 pint weighs a pound. *Price:* £5 per pint.

Lift Hormone: (40,5). This synthetic drug duplicates the effects of a complex hormone present in High Martians, which stimulates the action of the lifting gland. One dose given to a Canal or Hill Martian will allow them to fly as easily as a High Martian. There are potential side effects—if a Martian using the drug fails the Reliability roll, he suffers one wound, and his lifting gland is permanently destroyed. The drug has no effect on Terrans or Lizard-men. *Weight:* 5 doses per ounce. *Price:* £20 per dose.

THE ETHER

Miniaturlizer: (37,5). The miniaturizer can reduce the size of any object by a factor of two for each level of Reliability. Thus, a miniaturizer of Reliability 3 would reduce objects to one-eighth of their original size. The effect lasts 12 hours. While miniaturized, an individual's Strength, Endurance and Hit Points are reduced by the level of the miniaturization (keeping all fractions). *Weight:* 1 ton. *Price:* £20,000.

Teleportation Device: (43,5). The teleportation machine consists of two booths. Objects placed in one booth can be instantaneously transported to the other, no matter what distance separates them. The device's range is based on the Reliability, as given in the following table:

Reliability	Range
1	150 yards
2	1 mile
3	100 miles
4	10,000 miles
5	1 million miles
6	100 million miles

To operate, the transmitting booth must be supplied with one power factor for each level of distance to the receiver. It can send 500 pounds of material. *Weight:* Each booth weighs 1000 pounds. *Price:* £10,000 per booth.

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Superluminal Propeller: (44,5). The superluminal propeller is a type of ether propeller capable of driving an ether flyer at speeds above that of light, making it possible to reach other stars. A superluminal propeller is similar in most respects to an ordinary ether propeller, with a power level equal to Reliability, and an efficiency equal to 20+(3×Reliability). The only difference is that the speed value ([power level×efficiency]÷lifted mass) *squared* gives the speed in multiples of the speed of light. So if the vessel's speed value is 2, it can achieve four times the speed of light. Superluminal propellers cannot work within 10 million miles of a planet. This means that a vessel must still have an ordinary ether propeller in addition to the superluminal drive. **Weight:** 4 tons per power level. **Price:** £10,000 per speed value.

OPTICS

Night Photographic Plates: (27,3). Night photographic plates are sensitive to infrared light, rather than visible light, allowing the operator to take photographs in darkness. Of course, the plates must be developed in a darkroom before the images can be seen. **Weight:** 8 plates weigh 1 pound. **Price:** Each plate costs £1.

Optic Fibers: (30,2). Optic fibers are curious filaments which transmit light, thus allowing individuals to see around corners or down long shafts. Other useful applications are left to the players and referee.

Weight: 3 feet of quarter-inch optic fiber weighs 1 pound. **Price:** £1 per pound.

GEOLOGY AND METALLURGY

Nonadhesive

Surface: (24,1). An amazing substance with the extremely useful property that nothing can stick to it. Possible applications include cookware, and vehicles for use in the muddy regions of Venus. **Weight:** Negligible. **Price:** Covering an object with nonadhesive surface adds 10% to the price of the item.

Monofilament: (30,2). Monofilament is an extremely thin cable with a variety of uses and some associated dangers. A single

strand of monofilament has a tensile strength of 100 pounds; additional fibers add their capacity. Because of its thinness, monofilament can seriously injure persons handling it. A strand of monofilament is a perfect blade, capable of cutting through almost any substance like a wire through cheese. **Weight:** 100 feet of monofilament weighs half a pound. **Price:** £1 per foot.

FLIGHT

Ornithopter: (27,5). An ornithopter is a flying machine that mimics the flight of birds. An ornithopter is thus capable of vertical takeoff and landing, and can fly at a speed of 40 mph plus 10 times the Reliability of the device. Ornithopters can carry a pilot and either one passenger or 200 pounds of cargo. **Weight:** 1000 pounds. **Price:** £100. **Fuel:** 20 pounds of gasoline per hour; normal fuel capacity is 100 pounds.

PRECISION MACHINERY

Kinetographic Camera: (17,2). A fascinating device which records movement on long reels of celluloid film. When the films are developed and run at the proper speed, moving images can be seen. The device must be cranked by hand. **Weight:** 25 pounds. A reel of film weighs 2 pounds per 15 minutes of running time. **Price:** A camera costs £20, and film costs 5d per minute of running time.

Air Gun: (23,3). A firearm similar to an ordinary rifle, which uses compressed air rather than powder to propel the bullets. This makes the air gun utterly silent and smokeless. The disadvantage is that the weapon's air tank must be filled using a large compressor, making it unsuitable for field use. An air gun has the firing characteristics of a lever-action carbine in all respects. It can hold enough compressed air to fire a complete magazine of six shots. **Weight:** 10 pounds. **Price:** £150.

COMBUSTION

Rocket Rifle: (27,2). This weapon is particularly useful for low-gravity environments, where the recoil from an ordinary weapon would be troublesome. A rocket rifle fires small solid-fuel rockets, thus eliminating recoil and the need for a heavy barrel. Its rate of fire is 1, and it must be reloaded after every shot. It inflicts a wound of 1 and has no required Strength. The range is 100 yards. **Weight:** 5 pounds. **Price:** £3. The ammunition costs 10/— for each shot.

Incendiary Bullets: (17,2). These bullets, impregnated with phosphorus or some similar chemical, are especially effective against highly flammable targets (such as zeppelins). Objects hit by incendiary bullets have a chance of catching fire equal to the Reliability of the bullets. The effect on living targets is normal. **Price:** £1 per 50 rounds. Ω

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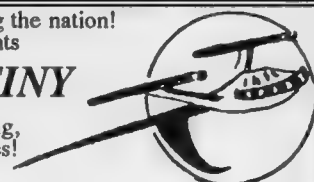
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The PCs are summoned to the British Legation in Syrtis Major. There, they are told that a European, Lawrence Carson, has been kidnapped by Hill Martians—steppe nomads of the Nepenthes-

Thoth Steppe. The British Legation is aware of the situation because a Hill Martian nomad delivered a ransom note. The PCs are asked, in the queen's name, to rescue the poor chap before something unspeakable happens to him. It is possible that German agents are behind this ungentlemanly scheme.

Should any cad in the party require a reward beyond that of knowing he has served the queen and rescued a fellow Englishman from the clutches of the local barbarians, the legation will reluc-

tantly pay him £30—and do their best to make him feel thoroughly guilty about it.

APPROACH

The legation gives the group a map showing the general location of the nomads' campsite (use the map on page 164 of *Space: 1889*). The campsite is in the hex due west of the city of Thoth. The party needs to make its way there, then locate nomad camp. The PCs must devise their own plan for rescuing Carson. The legation has told them that Carson is a sound fellow, who can be counted on to keep his head in a crisis.

RETRIEVAL

During the trip out, the referee should roll for encounters normally using the tables in the rulebook. After accomplishing their mission, the adventurers

will make their way back to Syrtis Major, hopefully with Carson or a letter from him explaining the situation. Normal encounter rolls are appropriate. Should the party have angered the steppe nomads (say by perforating a number of them with heavy revolvers in a fit of pique), those worthies will follow them as far as Shastapsh, where the local British garrison will dissuade them from further pursuit.

MAP

The map is taken from the Shutterbug scenario card in *Twilight Encounters* (or *Twilight: 2000* second edition), as it can be used as a generic temporary encampment in almost any time period or campaign. It is reproduced here for your convenience.

When the characters arrive, there are



Exogamous

only 20-30 Hill Martians present, though several hundred more will arrive for a wedding feast over the next few days. So the longer the PCs take making their move, the more outnumbered they will be. The guards are expecting some Red Men to attend as Carson's guests, so they will be friendly toward the PCs unless attacked. The PCs should not know this at first, so they will probably either sneak in or launch an assault. Sentry positions are marked on the map.

The tribe's chief and his daughter, Kallinak, are in tent 4; Carson is in tent 6. If the would-be rescuers observe the camp for a while before making their approach, they will see Carson wandering around the place freely and without concern, apparently on friendly terms with the Martians, especially with an attractive and richly dressed girl.

REFEREEING THE SCENARIO

Running this scenario may give PCs the impression that humans and Martians can intermarry, in the tradition of pulp writers such as Edgar Rice Burroughs. If you don't like this approach, you may want to devise an alternative plot line.

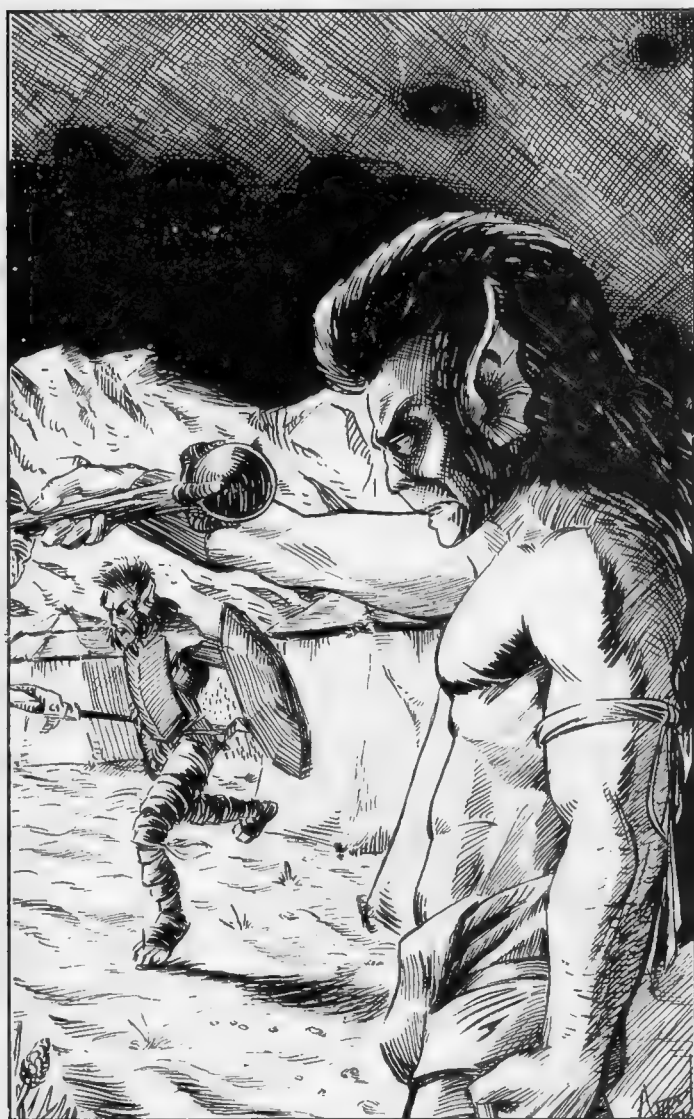
For the truth is that Carson has not been kidnapped—he has "gone native," marrying into the steppe nomads. The "ransom note," in a dialect poorly understood by the British, is in fact an invitation to Carson's wedding to a Hill Martian princess. Carson's explanatory covering note was lost by the courier on the way to Syrtis Major, and his explanation was not understood.

While he poses as a footloose adventurer and explorer, Carson is in fact a foreign office agent on a delicate mis-

sion among the nomads. It is this which explains the British Legation's interest in the affair, their suspicions of German involvement and their reluctance to simply send an aerial gunboat to blast the tribe into submission. However, neither Carson nor the legation planned on his romantic involvement with Kallinak.

If the PCs resolve the matter without bloodshed, the legation will officially be pleased that a strong bond had been forged between the nomads and the British by Carson's wedding, although he will be ostracized by some for going native. The tribe and the happy couple will treat them hospitably, and all will be well-disposed toward them in future encounters.

If the rescue attempt results in violence, especially if Kallinak is killed, the PCs will gain the nomads and Carson as bitter enemies.



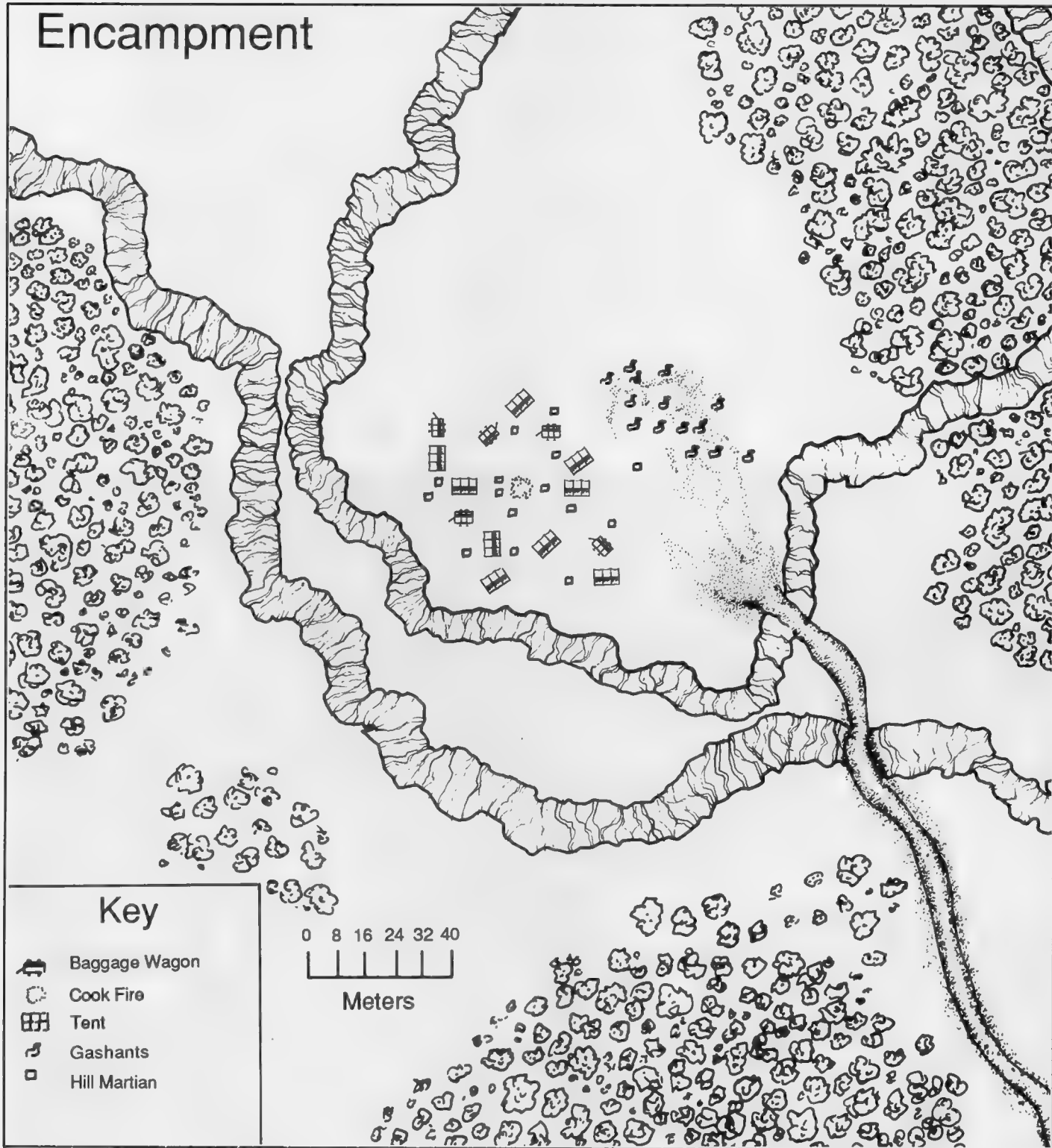
Mating

Space: 1889

By Andy Slack

Challenge 68 71

Encampment



NPCs

Kidnapped European: Lawrence Carson is an Elite foreign office agent. His motivations are Leader, Aggressive. He is dressed as a Hill Martian warrior and is unarmored, but carries a heavy revolver and a saber. Carson's charisma has served him well and has caused the tribe to accept him. He feels the barbaric life-style suits him much better than that of the typical European, especially since his lowly birth will forever bar him from true power in Britain.

When the chief dies, Carson's marriage will give him control of the nomad tribe.

Hill Martian Princess: Kallinak is an Experienced Hill Martian. Her motivations are Arrogant, Adventurousome. As the chief's only child, Kallinak has been treated with deference since birth and has lacked for nothing. She has come to consider this her right and so appears arrogant. Kallinak has been trained in the arts of rulership and war, which has given her a taste for adventure and the confidence to undertake it.

ALTERNATIVES AND VARIANTS

Should your group prefer a genuine kidnapping, assume that the steppe nomad chief intends to forcibly marry Carson to his daughter. This will mean he does not need to pay for his daughter's dowry. Furthermore, under local (Thoth) law, the son-in-law is responsible for supporting all his bride's relatives—and is Carson not an off-worlder, therefore by definition incredibly rich? Ω



ANIMÉ

LA2292

Lights from Richter's HUD threw ghostly colored patterns on his face. The sensor array built into his exosuit told him that the armored hovertruck was approaching at a steady 167 kph. He stepped out on the slick superhighway, the bright lights of the Neo Angeles skyline cutting through the murky darkness above. Kath and Rick were set up in ambush positions further down, ready to spring the trap. Newton told them this was a routine extraction. As he unlocked the safety on the 20mm autocannon, he realized Newton always said that.

The torrential rainstorm had soaked her dress, and wisps of her hair clung to her cheek. Clarissa tried to yell over the howling wind, but Victor was oblivious to her frantic warnings. Against the side of the huge skycity, Clarissa could just make out the silhouette of Rostopchin, the Russian anarchist. The gray Atlantic below seemed to boil. As lightning illuminated the surrounding sky, Clarissa noticed a glint in Rostopchin's hand. A bomb! Wasting no time, she

By Darold Higa

grabbed Victor's rifle, a leftover from the American Civil War. She leveled the Springfield just as Victor had showed her and calmly took aim at the anarchist.

"Admiral Linodan, detecting a warp distortion in quadrant 449. Magnitude is registering off the scales, ma'am."

Admiral Linodan tensed. The Empire had finally brought its genocidal war to the league's core worlds. With evacuation impossible, Novidom's 32 billion citizens faced imminent destruction. Linodan surveyed her assets, bright-colored shapes suspended in the huge holotank. Over half of her 500 ships of the line were crippled. Most of her auxiliaries were hastily converted merchant ships. Not much against a fleet of thousands. However, she still had one ace in the hole. Her carrier's fighter bays were filled with the latest development by league scientists, the prototype combat suit.

Linodan's thoughts were interrupted by a deafening screech. As she frantically looked about, it became apparent that the rest of the bridge crew was oblivious to the piercing noise. Then a voice cut through the vast folds of space between her and the enemy fleet. Vaza had found her psionic image:

"So we meet again, Alicia. So good of you to wait for me."

Linodan would not run away this time. Sweat dripped from the admiral's brow as she struggled to resist Vaza's psionic assault. She drew a long breath. "Go to red alert. Launch all combat suit squadrons!"

Linodan tensely watched the main viewscreen. Her heart raced as the combat suits engaged the Empire's fighter screen. Unable to match the superior firepower of the league's new weapon, the Empire's first attack wave disintegrated under a barrage of missiles and lasers. Now the odds were even. Linodan had finally shaken off Vaza's psionic attacks, and she focused her full attention on the battle. Her cool blue eyes burned with a renewed ferocity.

"Attention all ships, prepare for engagement. We're going in."

The battle for Novidom was about to begin.

Japanese animation, or *anime* (pronounced ah-nee-may), is an excellent resource for the SFRPG referee, providing a bountiful source of inspiration for roleplaying adventure ideas. The growing popularity and accessibility of *anime* in America means that working *anime* into your RPG adventures is easier than ever before.

Anime can be used and integrated into any campaign. Ideas from *Silent Mobius* can work their way into **Dark Conspiracy**. *Anime* mecha might influence a battle involving combat walkers in **2300 AD**. The backdrops of Mega-Tokyo in *Bubble Gum Crisis* might influence your cityscape descriptions in *Cy-*

berpunk or *Shadowrun*. The assassin robots in *Black Magic M-66* might pop up in *Star Wars* or *MegaTraveller*. The possibilities are endless! The following are some ways to add *anime* to your SFRPG.

GENRE

All RPGs fall into some sort of genre, and *anime* is an exciting source of alternative genres for gaming. Within SF *anime* are a variety of sub-genres.

Mecha War Stories: By far the largest category of animation rests in the mecha genre. Almost all Japanese science fiction includes mecha. Mecha (pronounced mek-ah) are the war robots of *BattleTech* fame. Mecha range from the behemoths in *Mobile Suit Gundam* and *Macross* (known in the US as *Robotech* first generation) to powered exoskeletons like in *Appleseed*, *Megazone* and *Genesis Climber Mospeda* (known in the US as *Robotech* third generation).

Space Empires at War: This genre usually features titanic space battles between vast starfaring races. Examples include the *Gall Force* line and the *Gunbuster: Aim for the Top!* series.

Cyberpunk, Post-Holocaust and Dark Future: The cyberpunk genre has spawned a flurry of animation in Japan. Dark future themes are popular for animation, often adding mecha to a cyberpunk storyline. Shows in this genre include the ever-popular *Bubblegum Crisis* series and the *Megazone* series. Along a different path, *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* features mankind struggling to survive a drastically altered ecology. Another sub-genre includes *Rhea Gall Force*, a post-apocalyptic *Terminator*-like dark future.

Victorian Science Fiction: One of the recent hottest animated TV shows in Japan has been *Nadia: The Secret of Blue Water*. Loosely based on Jules Verne's *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, the series features a princess, high-tech submarines and a mysterious blue crystal. *Castle in the Sky*, *Laputa*, an older film, creates a spectacular universe of vaguely Germanic air dreadnoughts looking to rob the wealth of the legendary floating city of Laputa (of Swift fame).

Mixed Genre: Many series defy any singular classification. Some examples include police and mecha (*Mobile Police Patlabor*), police and tanks (*Dominion*), and Cthuloid spirits and cyberpunk (*Silent Mobius*).

SETTING

Anime can provide very powerful visual cues for the roleplaying setting. SF *anime* has been set in every environment, from toxic wastelands to spacestations. For the dark future game, images of Genom Tower rising from the heart of Mega-Tokyo or *Clockwork Orange*-like images of Neo-Tokyo from *Akira* can provide vivid backdrops for your campaign. The confusion and horror of an

orbital colony under attack are portrayed spectacularly in the *Mobile Suit Gundam* series. *Nadia* and *Laputa* have wonderful images for the **Space: 1889** campaign. For the *Terminator* future feel, the human resistance camps in *Rhea Gall Force* are another excellent visual resource. The toxic jungles and human enclaves in the post-apocalyptic *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* are yet another source of descriptions and images for your players.

PLOT

Plots in *anime*, as in movies, tends toward the simple. Rarely does a movie or TV series have the time to develop as intricate a plot as in a book. This does not exclude using *anime* as a potential source for plot ideas your SFRPG adventure, however. *Anime* can be a treasure-trove of plot ideas, devices, twists and sparks of inspiration that can make the difference between a flat game and an exciting one. Often, I've found that adding a little *anime*-inspired twist can add extra spice to any gaming session.

CHARACTERS

Anime can provide the referee with the inspiration for catalogs full of NPCs. Anyone—from the infamous Kei and Yuri from the *Dirty Pair* to the enigmatic Sha from *Gundam*—can pop up as NPCs in your campaign. In roleplaying, *anime* characters can be the inspiration for a look, a personality or even a character archetype.

The biggest danger in using characters from *anime* is recognition. If you want to keep your borrowed NPC's motivations a secret, watch out for the *anime* fan in your group!

MUSIC

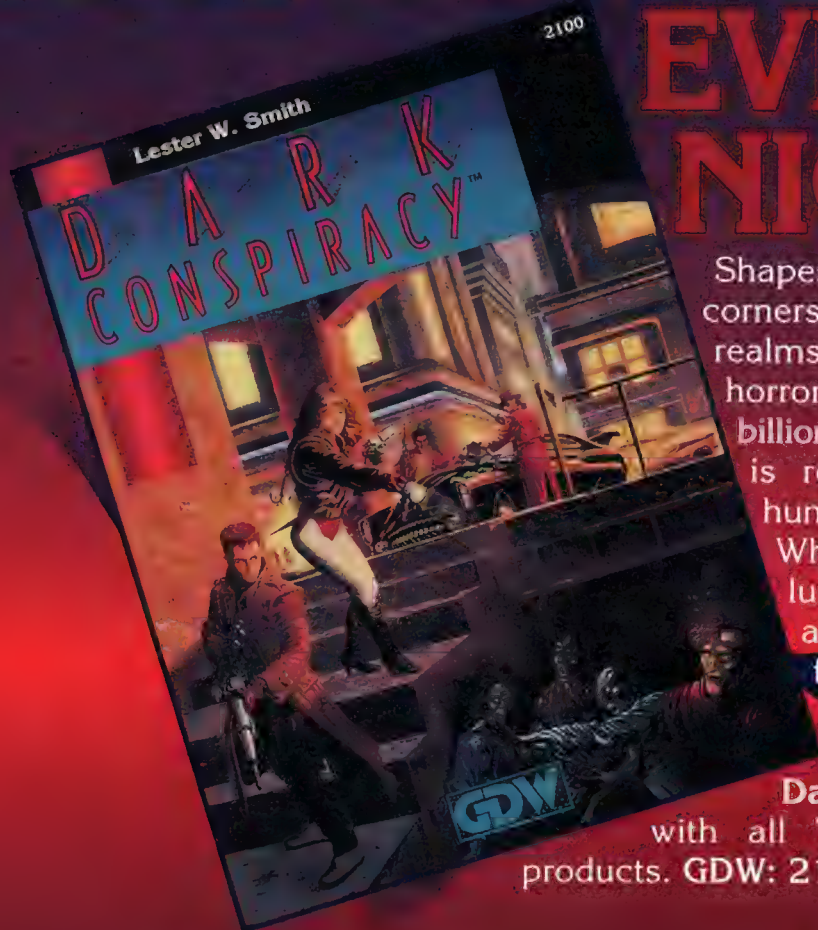
Anime soundtracks can be a great source of music for the total roleplaying experience. *Anime* soundtracks, called background music (BGMs), offer a variety of program music for the SF genre. By using *anime* music, a referee can use music which players may not recognize or which the players might associate with an entirely new visual vocabulary. *Anime* CDs are still relatively hard to obtain if you do not live in a major metropolitan area, but they are well worth seeking out.

ANIME GAME SYSTEMS

If you're already a fan, or if you would like to run an "*anime* game," there are a variety of game systems available on the market. The *Mekton* series (*Mekton II*, *Roadstriker II* and *Mekton Empire*) by R. Talsorian is an excellent generic system for running *anime* games, particularly those with mecha, big or small. If you want a dark, cyberpunk future, use Talsorian's *Interlock* system, which allows you to use roadstriders in your *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0* game. *Mecha!* by Seventh Street Games is another system dedicated entirely to mecha combat. ☺



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We will consider articles on any science-fiction roleplaying game by any publisher, including Twilight: 2000, Merc: 2000, Traveller, Dark Conspiracy, Space: 1889, 2300 AD, Shadowrun, Star Trek, Star Wars, BattleTech, High Colonies, Call of Cthulhu, Paranoia, Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0., Vampire, Werewolf and others. We will not provide coverage for any products produced by or licensed to Palladium Books, at the request of Palladium Books.

Adventure scenarios are preferred. Sourcebook-type articles should be combined with adventure ideas whenever possible. *Game variants* should be playtested in advance by you and be applicable to a broad range of gaming situations. *Referee's notes* should give hints to the referee on how to increase interest in the game, make his life easier or spark his imagination. In general, articles should be consistent with previously published information.

Twilight: 2000, Merc: 2000: Articles must be usable with Twilight: 2000 2nd edition or Merc: 2000. Ideas include an adventure situation with a geographical setting, short equipment descriptions, generic personalities or locations for use in a variety of situations, and examinations of modern military life or military equipment.

Traveller: All Traveller articles must be usable in the Traveller: The New Era universe. Include tasks and game statistics where appropriate. Ideas include an adventure with relevant background data, bestiary or short equipment description. Articles may follow either the "adventure nugget" or traditional Challenge format.

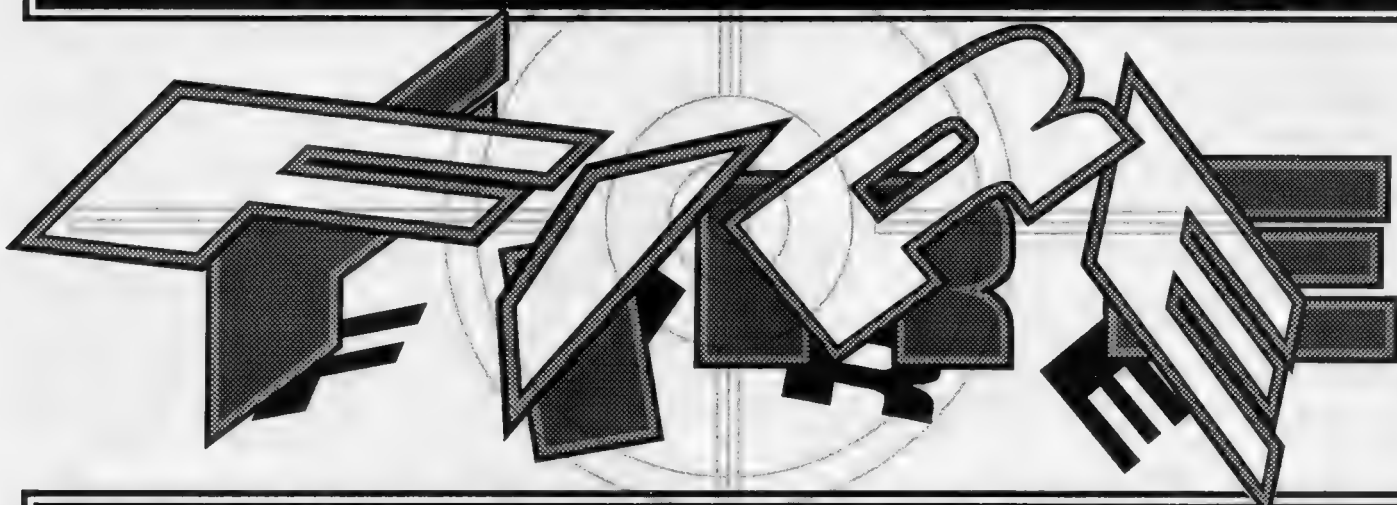
Space: 1889, 2300 AD, Others: Short adventures (2000-3000 words), plus a page or so of maps. See Twilight Encounters (a GDW supplement) for samples of the preferred format.

Reviews: Product reviews are not limited to the gaming systems normally covered in Challenge. Evaluations of science-fiction films, novels and other products are also accepted. All reviews must include the approximate date of release, plus the publisher, price, credits and components, if applicable. See previous reviews for format. Reviews should be 500-1000 words in length. Challenge will not publish a review by anyone listed in the credits of the product reviewed.

Fiction: Challenge is not seeking fiction at this time. Fiction submissions will not be read.

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*Good luck. If you have any questions, send them along with a SASE to:
Michelle Sturgeon, Managing Editor, PO Box 1646, Bloomington, IL 61702-1646 USA*



ON THE MOUNTAIN

This confrontation takes place on the Capellan world of Ward, on the Periphery frontier. It involves a 'mech lance of Ivan's Marauders (part of Longwood's Bluecoats, II Corps, Taurian Defense Forces) and a 'mech lance from 2nd Battalion, Kamakura's Hussars, Sarna Reserves, Capellan Regulators.

Ivan's Marauders are on a nonsanctioned raiding mission and have a limit as to how long they can be gone from the Taurian concordat. Kamakura's Hussars, 2nd Battalion is garrisoned on Ward, and 1st Lance, 3rd Company (the Capellan Unit for this scenario) is assigned to guard a supply depot. Use the mountain lake map as the east map, and the basic hills and central lake map as the west map.

DEFENDER

The Hussars' supply depot is located on top of the mountain in the area marked as the lake (see the Special Rules section). The supply depot's perimeter defenses consist of four 'mechs and a gun tower. All Liao units (including the gun tower) are equipped with a new weapon coordination system, the weapons linkage.

The Hussars deploy first. The gun tower is placed on the top of the mountain (hex 0711), and the 'mechs of 1st Lance, 3rd Company can start anywhere on the mountain lake board.

1st Lance, 3rd Company

1 Clint (command 'mech, Piloting 4, Gunnery 4)

Weapons:

3 linked Small Pulse Lasers

3 linked SRM4

1 Valkyrie (Piloting 6, Gunnery 3)

Weapons:

3 linked medium pulse lasers

1 Stinger (Piloting 6, Gunnery 4)

Weapons:

4 linked machineguns

1 Stinger (Piloting 6, Gunnery 4)

Weapons:

4 linked machineguns

All other statistics for these 'mechs conform to standard specifications.

The statistics for the gun tower are as follows:

CF: 40

Hexes: 1

Levels: 2

Power Plant Rating: 10, ICE

Power Amplifier: None

Framework (Internal Structure):

Heat Sinks: None

Armor Factor: 96 Armor Points

Turret: Yes

Turret Armor: 14 Armor Points

Weapons:

3 Linked AC/2

2 Tons AC Ammo

(90 rounds: 15 shots if guns are linked)

Tonnage

1 ton

—

8 tons

—

6 tons

2 tons

2 tons

18 tons

2 tons

ATTACKER

The 'mechs of Ivan's Marauders are deployed only after the Hussars, as they are making a surprise smash and grab assault. The 1st Lance, 3rd Company is not yet aware of the Marauders' presence in their sector.

The Marauders deploy on the western side of the basic hills and central lake map, no more than four hexes from the edge of the board.

Ivan's Marauders

1 Phoenix Hawk (command 'mech, Piloting 4, Gunnery 4)

1 Phoenix Hawk (Piloting 5, Gunnery 4)

1 Javelin (Piloting 5, Gunnery 4)

1 Javelin (Piloting 6, Gunnery 4)



Command Post Quarterly

Command Post, the newsletter supporting the Command Decision miniatures rules is now a full-fledged quarterly magazine!

Beginning in February with the 64-page double issue 8/9 (which will also be issue 1 of the magazine), Command Post Quarterly will be a quarterly, perfect-bound magazine with a color cover. In CPQ we will continue to bring you the same high-quality, well-researched articles you have come to expect from the Command Post, only more of them.

Authors Needed

Challenge, the magazine of science-fiction gaming, is seeking article submissions. We will consider articles on nearly any science-fiction roleplaying game by nearly any publisher. See page 77 for submission guidelines.

Journeys, the journal of multidimensional roleplaying, is also seeking submissions. We will consider articles on nearly any multigenre roleplaying game by nearly any publisher, including any Dangerous Journeys genre, GURPS, the Hero System, Torg, Amber, Dream Park and other games, as well as cross-genre articles and some few pieces of general interest. Send in a SASE for our free submission guidelines to Journeys, PO Box 1646, Dept J., Bloomington, IL 61702-1646 USA.

VICTORY CONDITIONS

The Marauders win by defeating all of the defending Hussar units or by successfully facing the House Liao Supply Depot. To raid the depot, a marauder 'mech must occupy one of the mountain lake hexes for three consecutive turns. During this time, the raider must not be the target of any weapon or physical attack (the raider is spending this time gathering and carrying stolen supplies). If the raider is attacked during the three-turn period, all efforts are lost (the supplies are dropped). Then the raiding 'mech must survive long enough to leave the combat area.

If either of these two conditions are met, Ivan's Marauders have won (the degree of victory depends on how much of the supplies the Marauders get). However, Ivan's Marauders have a time limit. From the start of play, the Marauders have 20 turns to get what they can from the supply depot and start back to their dropship.

If the Hussars prevent the Marauders from getting into the depot, or if they defeat all the Marauders, then the Hussars have won.

SPECIAL RULES

Treat all water hexes on the mountain lake board as pavement, with the lake itself being one large, fenced-in concrete slab (the chainlink fence is not nearly strong enough to stop a 'mech). Ω

For information on the Apple Churchill Hawkeye 4077 weapon linkage system, refer to "On the Cutting Edge" by Vincent J. Tognarelli and Ryan Gore in **Challenge 67**.

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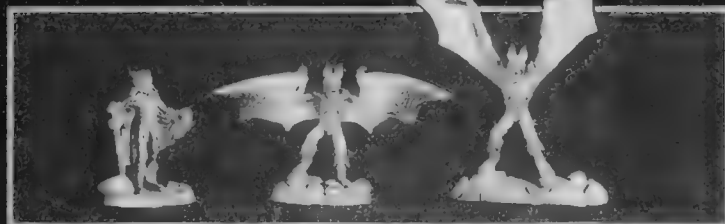
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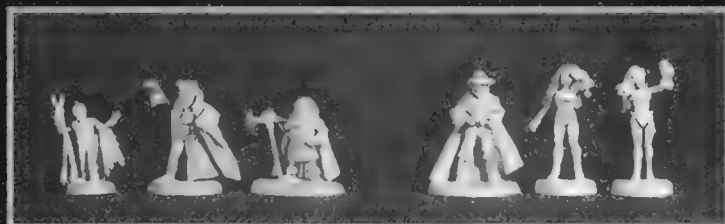
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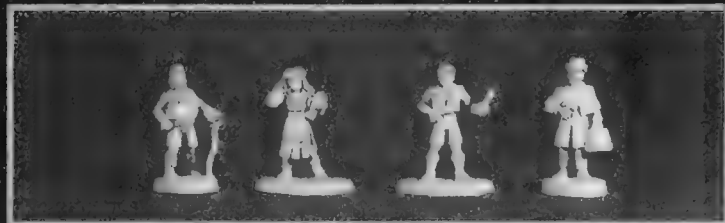
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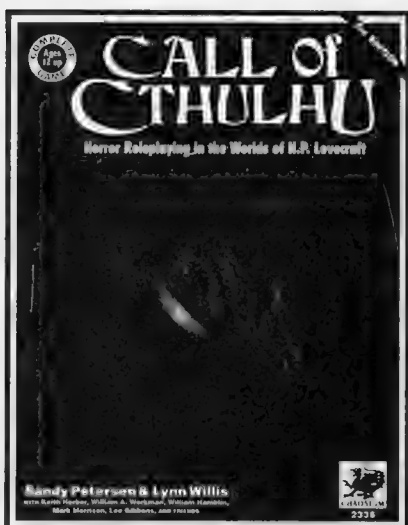
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Call of Cthulhu

Fifth edition.

Chaosium Games. \$21.95.

Written by Sandy Petersen and Lynn Willis (with help from Keith Herber, William A. Workman, William Hamblin, Mark Morrison, Lee Gibbons and friends).

Softbound, 240-page, roleplaying game book.

Published in 1992.

Review by Craig Sheeley.

Call of Cthulhu is Chaosium's time-honored horror game of adventuring in the world and Mythos postulated by the master of morbidity, H. P. Lovecraft. In this game, you play the part of puny mortals delving into areas of knowledge that no man was meant to uncover. The penalty for failure is death. The penalty for success is learning new information about the reality of existence that defies imagination and sends most souls screaming into the relative comfort of insanity. The universe is populated by things both horrifically inhuman and callously malevolent. The Great Old One, Cthulhu, is just one of the main players in this dimension of despair—there are even worse things to be found!

Call of Cthulhu has been called the game where "you go mad, then you die—or you die, then go insane, then die again—or you just die, if you're lucky." True to the visions of Lovecraft, no matter how you struggle, you can't win. You're ranked against immortals with the powers of gods. The best you can do is delay them for a time. The fifth edition of the game seems to take this into account with some of the new rules and rule changes.

First, characters are given more skills and a more generous character generation system. You still won't find many supermen, but you won't find as many wimps as before, either. The entire character generation process is highly streamlined and easily illustrated on a two-page flowchart.

Experience now comes easier. No longer do you roll a measly D6 for experience advances; now you roll a D10! Some *CoC* gamemasters see that as too much, and I tend to agree. But considering the death toll in the over-monstered scenarios published by Chaosium, this adjustment may reflect a high attrition rate and a desire for characters to get good at what they do, fast!

Some old skills have been deleted, and some new skills have been added. "Keepers" (as *CoC* GMs are called) are told that the skill lists are flexible; if they like deleted skills, they can put 'em back in.

Why the new skills? One of the best features of this edition is that it covers, in a nutshell, all three of the adventuring timelines (1890s, 1920s, 1990s) between two covers. Now a *CoC* Keeper can run any timeline without having to buy *Cthulhu By Gaslight* or *Cthulhu Now*, although these two supplements are worthwhile investments. Indeed, the book includes different character sheet fronts for each milieu (all sharing a separate back), a consolidated weapons list and sample equipment lists for each timeline.

Of course, the book contains the requisite sections on Mythos magic, combat, Sanity, background on the Cthulhu Mythos, stats and descriptions of the moving nightmares that stumble out of the various writings, overviews of history, politics and the occult over the years, the article on forensic pathology from *Cthulhu Now*, etc. It's not quite the equal of having all the supplements, and you definitely need the supplements and adventures to have a complete spell list, but it's the best edition of *CoC* to date.

EVALUATION

I am seriously impressed with this product. From cover to cover, it's well done. The covers themselves are semi-gloss, to resist dirt and spills (one of the banes of gaming). The art is largely good (except for that terrible picture of Lovecraft inside the first page, which seems to be a trademark of the game and all its supplements), and much of

the art is new. The text is readable and easily accessible, and there's even an index!

The organization and format of this book deserve special mention. I hold that every game company should study this book to learn what to do right. The "cheat sheet" pages on combat, Sanity, character generation, etc. are invaluable; I sincerely hope that Chaosium makes a new Keeper's screen with these.

I don't really like Lovecraft stories. The background of constant fear, terror and depression is enforced by the fact that in *Call of Cthulhu*, you can't win. You'll never win. Give up now and accept your fate. But this book is so well-written and interesting that I started running the game again (an action which gave me hideous nightmares in the past). Could the nightmares have been a reaction to a first-generation product, the old *CoC*? I don't know, but the game's running well, and the nightmares of fighting poor game organization are gone.

I only have one real regret about *Call of Cthulhu, Fifth Edition*. I do wish Chaosium had reserved enough space to include the words to the now-famous song, *The Lair of Great Cthulhu*.



Renegades

Games Workshop. \$29.95.

Designed by Andy Chambers, Jervis Johnson and Rick Priestley.

Boxed supplement to *Space Marine*, 2nd edition. 80-page rulebook, 18 die-cut card-sheets, six-sided artillery die.

Published in 1992.

Review by Craig Sheeley.

Renegades is the second in Games Workshop's series of supplements for *Space Marine*, 2nd edition. It covers the forces of the alien Eldar (Games Workshop's "Elves in Space") and the

largely inhuman combatants of the Chaos lords.

The format is similar to that in the first supplement, *Armies of the Imperium*: Foreword, background information on one race, then unit descriptions. *Renegades'* foreword does have an added feature—the authors take a few paragraphs to explain the fact that the unit cards included in the supplement (and used in the rest of the game) do not constitute an absolute upper limit on army sizes and composition. Gee, I thought they said that in *Armies of the Imperium*, too. I suppose some people didn't see it (a common problem with GW material—you have to read *all* of the rulebook in order to avoid missing vital rules stuck in out-of-the-way places).

The Eldar section starts, surprisingly, with an explanation of the typos, rules mistakes and errata applied to the Eldar forces, offering evidence that some playtesting has actually occurred. Eldar players, take note—several units have changed since the first information in the basic game.

The Eldar background section reiterates the story of the fall of the Eldar, their psychic creation of Slaanesh, the Chaos Lord of Pleasure, their scattering throughout space and their constant struggle to escape the fate of being devoured by their own emotional creation, a fate worse than death. For the most part, *Warhammer 40,000* players will be very familiar with the story, since it is largely the same information that has been published in *White Dwarf* and the *Warhammer 40,000 Compilation*. *Compilation* owners will also be familiar with the fiction piece in *Renegades*, a straight copy of the fiction in the *Compilation*, with a few added details.

ELDAR SECTION

The Eldar unit section is interesting, illustrating the war-products of their odd psycho-kinetic manufacturing. All the previously published units are represented, plus changes in some Aspect Warriors (Dire Avengers are more powerful; Striking Scorpions and Howling Banshees are now less useful against vehicles).

New units include support vehicles like the force-walled Wave Serpent, Warp Hunter, web-spinning Doomweaver (the only Eldar indirect-fire unit, save Titan missile launchers), Prism Cannon, War Walkers, Titans and the awesome might of the demon-like Avatar.

The Eldar unit cards outline new (better) units for Eldar armies.

Good Things: The Doomweaver, which gives the Eldar some area-denial capability as well as some indirect fire. The changes in Aspect Warriors. The new Eldar scouts, a force which can't be seen until it's too late. The Windrider host, an inexpensive jetbike unit that allows the Eldar player to use all his bikes without making it all of his army. The Tempest host, which is a 10% point-price break, as long as you have 6 Tempest models. The Spirit Host, perfect for heavy infantry. The fact that Eldar vehicle models come in packs perfectly sized for the unit compositions, a nice piece of friendliness from Games Workshop, which usually designs units of a size that two or more packs are required to make them.

Bad Things: The Warp Cannon, mounted on the Warp Hunter and Titans, is a waste of time. There's a snowball's chance of hitting anything with it.

The Avatar may be free, but he's too slow to get into combat, and no unit can carry him!

The Eldar are still dead when they face the Imperial Guard—they don't have any artillery that can rival the Guards', and the Doomweaver can't do the job.

And Eldar Titans are now the only Titans that the battlefield will ever see. They're too tough, too well-armed, too cheap, and their holo-fields keep them invulnerable to anything save artillery fire. Eldar Titans should cost as much as Imperial Warlord Titans of Ork Gargants.

CHAOS SECTION

The Chaos section of *Renegades* had a brief foreword expanding the minimal information on the forces of Chaos that was provided in the basic game, then lunges right into the problems of rules for dæmons. Considering that Chaos armies are literally built around dæmons, the rules are important. Putting together a Chaos army is tricky. First you purchase the dæmons, then you purchase units to accompany them. The dæmons are the unit leaders; when they die, their minions can crumble.

When all the rules are put into action, playing a Chaos army is, well, chaotic. Chaos magic cards can give a Chaos force favorable mutations at critical moments; dæmons can rout entire enemy formations with a mere charge. Likewise, a dæmon's loss can rout en-

tire Chaos formations with a single charge! Chaos armies are given a load of magical advantages, and they need them. Somewhere, Chaos picked up the idea that ranged weapons were sissy, and not needed. Chaos forces are short on range and long on hand-to-hand, which means they lose a lot of units closing.

Good Things: Usable magic for Chaos armies. Hideously powerful warmachines for the War Dæmon, Khorne.

Really well-done plastic miniatures available elsewhere, which makes Chaos armies attractive.

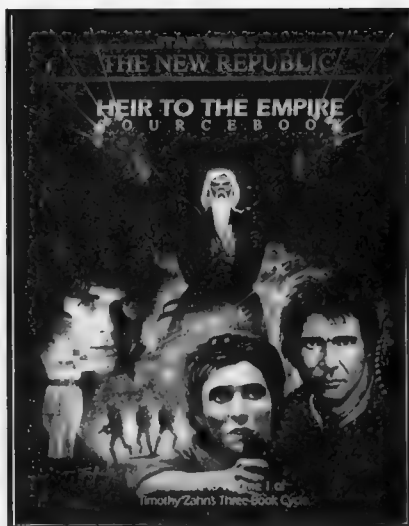
Bad Things: Khorne is given a whitewash press job in order to make it "a noble warrior who respects strength and bravery, who takes no joy in destroying the weak, and who considers the helpless unworthy of his wrath." The dæmon-living copywriter ignores the first line of this press release, which describes Khorne as "the god of anger and destruction." Chaos lords fight together, forgetting enmities described in previous works as all-consuming (the concept of Khornate warriors fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with Slaaneshites, their direst enemies, is hard to swallow), in order to sell more figures. Basing Chaos armies around dæmons for the sole purpose of marketing dæmon figures. Restricting Chaos Marines to four chapters, revolving around dæmon-prince Primarch leaders, also for the purpose of selling figures (specifically the Primarch figures). Without Primarchs, you can't have Chaos Marines (which leaves the most famous Chaos chapter, the Sons of Horus, a.k.a. the Black Legion, in limbo—their Primarch was Horus, and he's very, very dead, so they're not included in the supplement at all).

EVALUATION

Unfortunately for those wanting to play Eldar or Chaos armies, this supplement is really rather necessary. Eldar players can muddle through with just the information in the basic game, but there are enough rule changes here to make things difficult without it. And there's no information on Chaos anywhere else, at all.

Like *Armies of the Imperium*, *Renegades* is packed with extra unit cards so GW can charge more money for the book.

If you want complete Eldar or Chaos armies, buy this. Then prepare to spend another two to three times the price of this supplement to acquire the miniatures needed to play it.



Heir to the Empire Sourcebook

West End Games. \$20.00.

Written by Bill Slavicsek.

144-page sourcebook for *Star Wars* RPG.

Published in 1992.

Review by Steve Maggi.

Heir to the Empire Sourcebook is West End Games' first outing with the *Star Wars* universe after the Battle of Endor and the fall of the Empire. The book is completely based upon the events in Timothy Zahn's novel which was released in the spring of 1991.

Inside the covers of this hardback book (soon to be softback when all the hardcovers are gone) are statistics of the novel's characters, starships, aliens, planets, vehicles and equipment. New Force powers and revised lightsaber rules will interest any campaign's Jedi Knights.

Besides statistics and new game rules, the book is filled with *great* illustrations by Allen Nunis (with the help of a couple friends), interesting maps of the locales from the novel and pieces of trivial facts that any *Star Wars* fan will gobble up.

GOOD STUFF

There is finally solid information for running a *Star Wars* campaign beyond the events in *Return of the Jedi*. This product allows gamemasters to run the game in a different light. Since the New Republic is the predominant power in the galaxy, the PCs can now operate in the open without the fear of Star Destroyers boarding them at every world. This changes their roles in the game: Instead of being secret operatives, they

are now troubleshooters, representatives and soldiers in the service of the New Republic. However, the Empire still controls a large chunk of the galaxy, and a region called "the Fringe" is in dispute between both sides. So players who still want to play the traditional *Star Wars* game in the later era can still do so, but this time the Empire has very limited resources.

The illustrations in this publication are very helpful in establishing the look and mood of the era. (It's still unknown whether or not there will be any more movies.) If you have trouble imagining what something looks like based on an author's description (like this reviewer), then the illustrations are a double bonus.

A lot of the sidebar material also fills in the gaps that were never really explained in the novel. One example elaborates on why the New Republic has a credibility problem with the numerous worlds once occupied by the Empire.

"DARK SIDE"

The biggest disappointment I found with this book is the repeating of information *already* printed in previous works for the *Star Wars* RPG. If you have the two basic rulebooks for the game, then you *already* have all the information on the starfighters and primary capital ships. Only the TIE Interceptor has been changed—the Imperials added shields since it is getting too expensive to replace these fighters.

A lot of the plot and basics about the *Star Wars* universe are repeated from the rulebooks, too. I found this to be an annoying waste of time to read again, and I figured the three movies already covered these facts.

If you also read the novel, you start to experience *déjà vu* with some of the entries and descriptions on the characters, aliens and planets. It seems that much of the text in the sourcebook is paraphrased from the text of the novel. I do not find that wrong or unethical, just really disappointing. However, this sourcebook is a licensed product from George Lucas, so this may not be West End Games' doing.

Another shortcoming is the lack of adventure material. It would have been very helpful on West End's part if this book came with a sample adventure. Most of the book is background information, which just provides ideas for the gamemaster to flesh out for the campaign or premises for adventures. Although this stuff is fascinating, it is not very practical if you are looking for adventures. These types of adventures

would give some gamemasters a push in the right direction when it came to running an *Heir*-era campaign.

EVALUATION

Overall, I recommend this sourcebook, but with minor reservations. If you are a *Star Wars* fanatic (like this reviewer), this book is a must to add to your collection, where it will serve two basic functions.

The first function is its intended purpose—to provide information on running a post-*Jedi* campaign. The Empire (as it was once known) may be much weaker, but that does not mean the source for adventure in the *Star Wars* universe is lower—it is actually higher. The types of adventures are now even more variable than before because the transition of power from the Empire to the New Republic is not going very smoothly.

Thanks to the power vacuum left by the Empire, there is a universe of opportunity for Alliance characters and non-aligned characters.

With a decent amount of imagination and hard work, any gamemaster could put together some interesting sessions with the information from this sourcebook.

The second function might be unintentional on West End's part, but I found the book to be incredibly useful as a companion when I re-read the novel. It provides easily accessible reference material to recap facts you may forget when reading Zahn's sequel, *Dark Force Rising*.

Despite all the criticisms I pointed out earlier, this is an excellent book. It is well organized and illustrated, and the attention to details that West End provides on *Star Wars* is there as always (i.e., a graphic showing how Grand Admiral Thrawn's fleet is organized when it appeared at the Sluis Van Shipyards attack).

The \$20 price tag may seem high for a sourcebook of this size, but it is well worth it—especially if you are a die-hard *Star Wars* player and fan. Even if you don't play the RPG, I highly recommend this book to fans since the illustrations of the exciting scenes from the novel are worth the money.

For gamers who only collect material that pertains to the game, I would not recommend this book (even though they will miss out on something pretty interesting). Instead, purchase the new second edition of the *Star Wars* RPG since the gaming material from this book will be in that publication, along with post-*Jedi* campaign material. Ω

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OPERATION ARMAGEDDON, the Star Trek RPG mass starship combat system by FASA. Will pay reasonable price. Contact Kenneth Minick, 2115 Pride Ave., Belpre, OH 45714. (68)

OLD COPIES OF JTAS, Challenge, Travellers Digest, High Passage or any other magazine or fanzine entirely devoted to Traveller. Also seeking old Traveller material from GDW or other publisher. Send a list to Paolo Bertiglia, Corso Siracusa n. 198, c.a.p. 10137, Torino, Italy. (68)

DR. WHO RPG supplement called The Sontarans. Will buy or trade. Contact Cary Layton, PO Box 416, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701. (68)

TWILIGHT: 2000 v.1 modules Armies of the Night, Going Home and RDF Sourcebook. Will pay any reasonable price. T. Ropers, 400 W. Shawn Court, Wheeling, IL 60090. (68)

DESPERATE for any Renegade Legion Centurion miniatures. Looking for all classes of tanks, in any condition. Please send details and an offer to Christopher King, 7331 Castleberg Court, Alexandria, VA 22310. (68)

VILANI & VARGR: I'll pay a good price for the book or for photocopies. James Brusoe, 30 N. Orchard, Madison, WI 53715. (68)

JTAS 4 and DGP's Referee's Kit. Contact John Kovalic, 4679 Goodland Park Road, Madison, WI 53711. (66)

TWILIGHT: 2000 1st edition products: Going Home, Pirates of the Vistula, Ruins of Warsaw, Black Madonna, RDF Source-

book, Armies of the Night. Contact Dexter Davis, 924 East 48th St., Brooklyn, NY 11203. (66)

GAME SCIENCE rules of The Petal Throne, any rules supplements and miniatures. Please send list with price and condition to David Peters, 5422 PineGlen Road, La Crescenta, CA 91214. (65)

BETA/VHS copy of 1979 Star Wars Christmas Special. Please contact Gotham Highlanders, 120 Gorrión Ave., Ventura, CA 93004. (65)

CHALLENGE 36, 37, 40, 45, 46, 48, 57. I would prefer originals, but photocopies will do. Also, any Striker 15mm miniatures. Any reasonable price. Send details to Joe Boeke, 2520 Camino del Sol, Fullerton, CA 92633-4825. (65)

25mm TRAVELLER miniatures from Grenadier. Prefer unpainted, but will consider painted if in good condition. Will trade duplicates of other Traveller miniatures or old Traveller material, or will pay cash. I am especially interested in the following numbers (found on the bases): T-2, T-6, T-7, T-10, T-12, T-15, T-27, T-29 through T-35, T-40, T-41 and (if they exist) T-47+. Also, the boxed set of about 12 figures. Contact David Pildner, 3984 Massillon Road, Apt. D, Uniontown, OH 44685. (65)

CALL OF CTHULHU magazine articles for bibliography I am writing. Have all Challenge, Different Worlds, White Dwarf and White Wolf articles. Mainly need fanzine, nongaming and foreign magazine appearances. Information needed: magazine name, issue, article name, author(s), type of article (scenario, rules, spells/books, essay on Lovecraft...), plus any pertinent notes. Willing to trade copies of articles. Anyone helping will be listed on credits if article published and sent copy of bibliography. Brent Heustess, 4305 Duval St #107, Austin, TX 78751. (64)

LOOKING TO PURCHASE Twilight: 2000 modules Armies of the Night and RDF Sourcebook. Will pay reasonable amount over cover price and shipping. J. Broder, 41 Hunting Hills Drive, Dix Hills, NY 11746. (64)

HELPI I'm a struggling RPG gamer and novice GM who is incarcerated in the Arizona prison system with no funds. Would any fellow RPG gamers be willing to help by donating AD&D (2nd edition), 2300 AD, MegaTraveller, Space: 1889, BattleTech, Shadowrun, Marvel Super-Heroes gamebooks, novels or magazines, or any Challenge, Dragon, Dungeon, White Dwarf or Polyhedron magazines? Photocopies would be greatly appreciated. Please send whatever you can to Richard Steinberg, #69458, Arizona State Prison, Florence/smu, PO Box 4000, Florence, AZ 85232. (64)

MORROW PROJECT and AfterMath material/ideas. Contact A. W., PO Box 69, New Almaden, CA 95042-0069. (64)

DRAGONTOOTH, Archive, Heritage miniatures. Will pay reasonable prices for fantasy,

sci-fi/historical miniatures. Also interested in old Martian Metals 15mm Traveller figures. Mitchell White, 1418 Basilan Lane, Nassau Bay, TX 77058. (64)

FANZINES

MOTIVE: An Amateur Press Alliance (APA) which covers all aspects of the RPG hobby, is looking for new members. Members contribute to and receive a 200-page (+/-), bimonthly APA. RPGs most often covered include MERP, Hero System, Twilight: 2000, Call of Cthulhu and BattleTech. For information, write to Jonathan Hanna, 79 Mimosa Dr., Watkinsville, GA 30677. (68)

HORROR GAMING APAZINE seeks participants. Focus will be on Dark Conspiracy, Call of Cthulhu, Vampire and Chill. Fiction and other games accepted. Please contact Dan Snuffin, 3138 NW Overhulse Road #8, Olympia, WA 98502. (68)

GET A FREE sample copy of The Gamer's Connection™. It's the newsletter for role-playing enthusiasts, covering all genres of gaming. Please write to TGC/Free Offer, PO Box 278331, Sacramento, CA 95827-8331. (68)

ALLIANCE ADDRESS: The only known Star Wars roleplaying 'zine in the galaxy needs subscribers and contributors. We are open for submissions and ideas. Send a large SASE for information to Universe Publications, PO Box 10142, Pittsburgh, PA 15232-0142. (66)

APART newsletter is free and covers a wide range of games and topics, with computer game reviews, plus RPG articles and scenarios. Send your name and address for a free copy. We are also looking for submissions from authors and artists (unpaid). Write to David P. Kufner, PO Box 373, Barpt, HI 96862-373. (66)

AMBERZINE is now published by Phage Press, PO Box 519, Detroit, MI 48231-0519. (64)

THE JOURNAL OF THE BRITANNIC TECHNOLOGICAL SOCIETY, a newsletter dedicated to the Space: 1889 RPG, is seeking art and article submissions relating to Victorian SF adventure. For submission guidelines, please send a SASE to The Journal of the Britannic Technological Society, c/o Dragonshead Gaming Concepts Ltd., 21W127 Tee Lane #3, Itasca, IL 60143. (63)

MELBOURNE TIMES: Newsletter of the Earth Colonies Development League provides background material for completely new, non-Imperium campaign setting. Features include news service, world briefs, character sketches, sophont descriptions, corporate portfolios, political analysis, cultural events and more. Subscribers and contributors send SASE to Melbourne Times, c/o David Johnson, 2800 NASA Road One #514, Seabrook, TX 77586. Overseas include three IRCs. (62)

Don't miss **Challenge 69!**

TWILIGHT: 2000

Avery's Ralders

If the marauders steal things, fine. We'll just steal it back. *By Andrew Borelli*

Operation: Point Man

The PCs are to find, locate and recon a suspected terrorist camp in the African country of Gabon. *By John T. Swann*

MEGATRAVELLER

Passing of the Flame

Regent Brzk of the League of Antares has been assassinated, throwing the league into chaos! *By James Maliszewski*

Good, Bad and Vilani

One departing ship is routed to

retrieve a valuable cargo when the Vilani megacorporation Makhidkarun leaves its holdings in Gushemege sector during the Rebellion. *By Clayton R. Bush*

DARK CONSPIRACY

Road Work

PCs hired to transport supplies and equipment to human survivors in Demonground-infested West Virginia may be lured into an elaborate Dark Minion plot. *By Michael C. LaBossiere*

SHADOWRUN

Who's On First

I think the last time I heard about somebody trusting somebody else was back in the early '20s. And that was only because the other guy had no choice. *By Chris Hussey*

CYBERPUNK

Tigr Happy

Someone is offering a fortune for four hours of time. But the employer contacts the prospects, not the other way around.

By Craig Sheeley

2300 AD

Repo Men

A desperate woman turns to the PCs for help. She needs them to kidnap her children.

By Andy Slack

Operation: Aurora

The computer requests your services for an important secret mission and testing of an experimental device. Aren't you so happy you could just hemorrhage?

By Greg Unger

SPACE: 1889

Melas

Portrait of a Martian city. *By James L. Cambias*

CALL OF CTHULHU

Tea and Biscuits

The MacGillivrays have a special dinner planned—a family reunion of sorts. But where in the world is Junior?

By Greg Unger

BATTLETECH

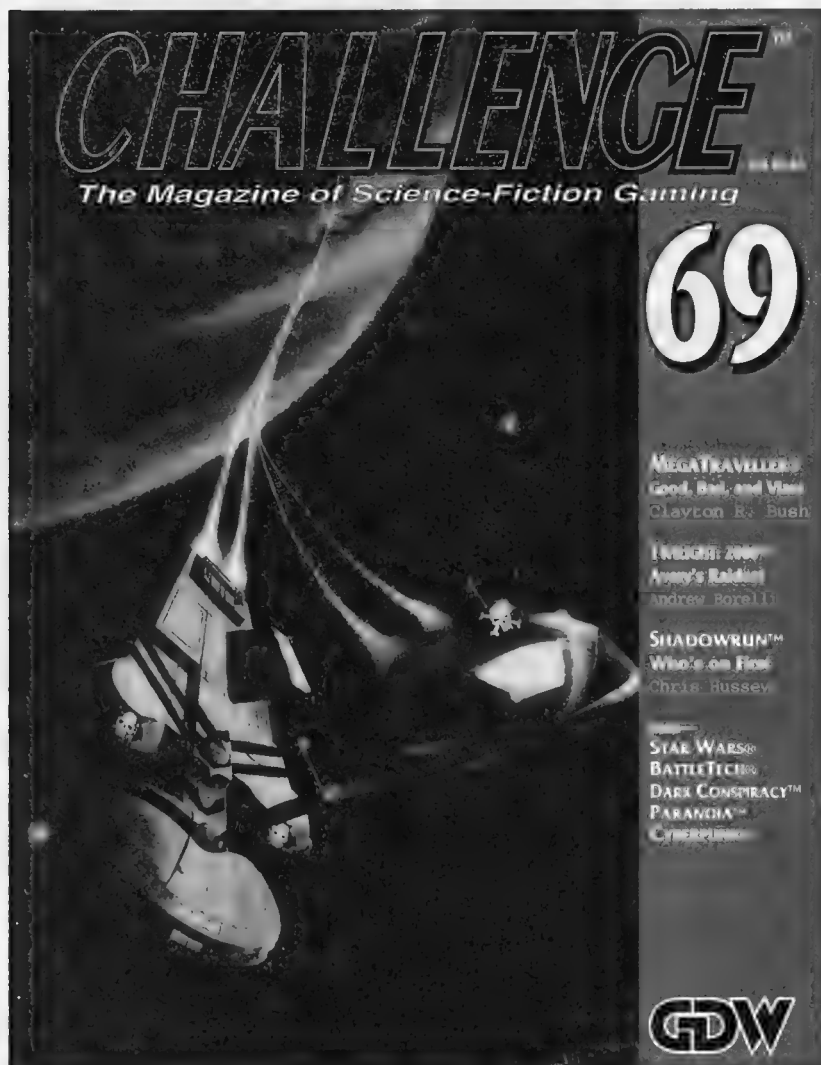
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Optional field weapons and infantry type additions to FASA's *BattleTech Compendium*.

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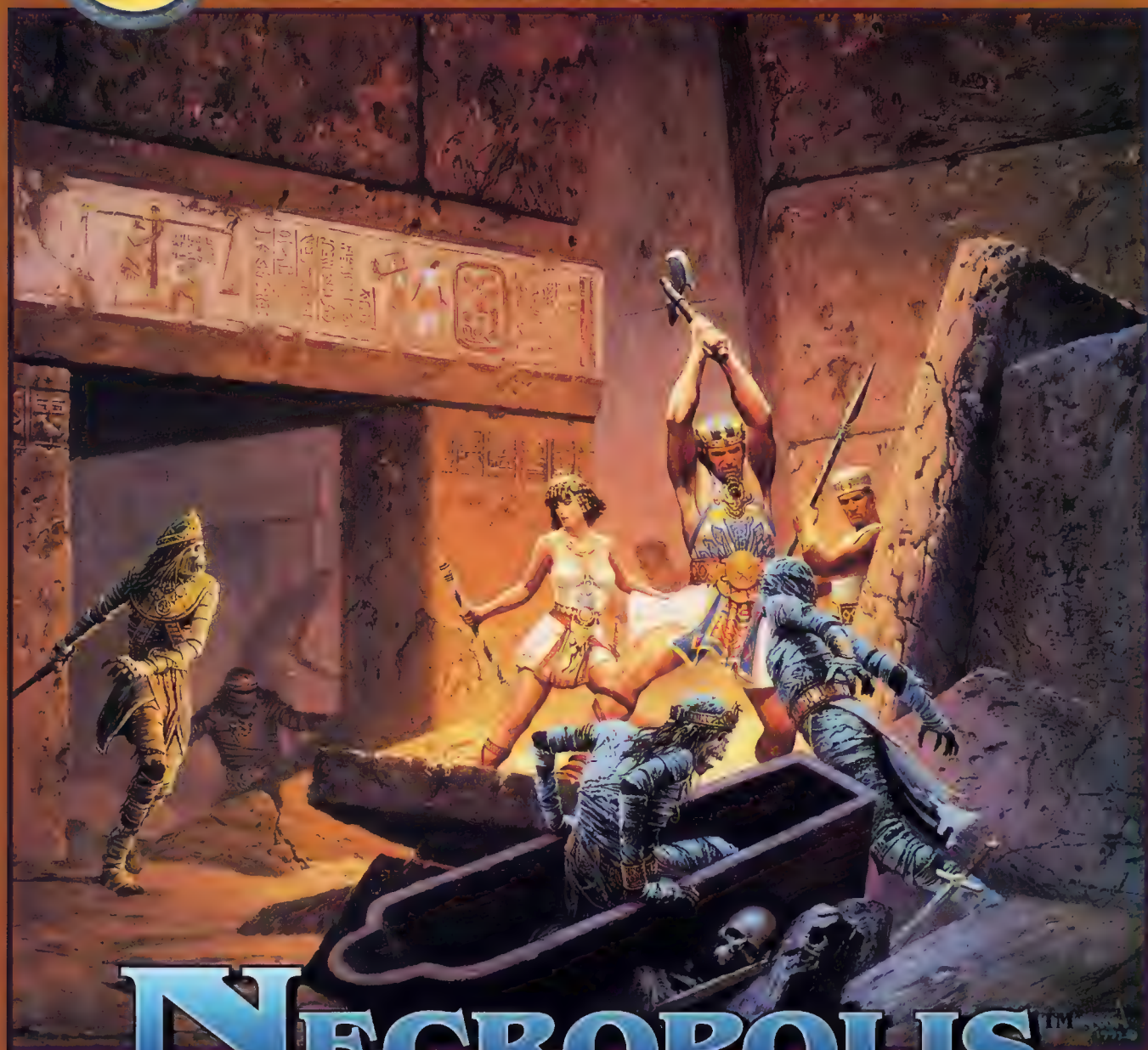
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